

Inspection of a good school: Castercliff Primary School

Marsden Hall Road North, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 8JJ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2023

Outcome

Castercliff Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto 'shine' aptly describes this friendly and welcoming school where every pupil is encouraged to do their very best.

Pupils talk about Castercliff Primary School as being part of 'one big family'. Warm relationships are at the heart of this school. Pupils said that they feel safe. They know that staff care about them. Pupils value the wide range of pastoral support that adults offer them. They trust that there is always an adult available to help them if they are worried.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They expect every pupil to achieve and behave well, and are successful at making this happen. Pupils are eager learners. They said that their teachers make learning fun.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They are responsible and considerate of each other. Older pupils are quick to help younger ones. On the rare occasions that bullying happens, adults deal with it immediately and effectively.

Leaders are always looking for ways to celebrate the rich diversity that there is in this inclusive school. They pledge to offer every pupil 'adventures and long-lasting memories' through a wide range of experiences, such as visiting theatres, being an outdoor explorer or being part of environmental projects.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have successfully adapted and rethought their curriculum to take account of the big increases in the number of pupils joining the school and address a past dip in outcomes. They have also made effective provision for the increase in pupils who speak English as an additional language or are new to English.

Leaders have designed an effective curriculum from early years through to the end of key stage 2. In most subjects, the curriculum gives pupils the knowledge and understanding to be confident learners. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want to teach pupils and the order in which they want to teach it. Leaders' approach to the curriculum ensures that most pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education and for life in modern Britain.

However, the curriculum is still to be finalised in a small number of subjects. In these subjects, leaders have not decided exactly what knowledge they want to teach pupils and in which order this knowledge should be taught. Occasionally, this hinders how well some pupils learn. Despite this, most pupils achieve well.

Teachers explain new ideas clearly. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. Teachers help pupils to revisit and remember important learning. They use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils make secure connections between new and previously learned concepts. Teachers use assessment information well to establish what pupils know and to plan future learning.

Reading is an extremely important feature in this school. There is a rich supply of books in each classroom and in the school library. Pupils told inspectors that they love the books they read and the stories that teachers read to them. Some pupils said that reading 'takes you out of reality and into another world' and that it 'helps your brain work and 'teaches you good vocabulary to use in your own work'.

As soon as they start in the Reception class, children learn letters and sounds through carefully planned activities. Adults in the early years and in key stage 1 use their specialist knowledge of the teaching of early reading well. This helps pupils to become increasingly confident readers by the time they leave key stage 1. Adults help pupils who find reading more difficult, including those who are new to English. Most quickly catch up with their peers and read confidently and fluently.

Leaders have adjusted provision effectively to meet the requirements of the increasing number of pupils with SEND. They quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND so that teachers can give them the right help to achieve both academically and in building their self-esteem. Pupils with SEND succeed alongside their peers and participate fully in the same curriculum and opportunities.

Pupils behave well. They are polite, courteous and listen carefully in lessons. Leaders have improved the attendance of pupils, which had dipped following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, although overall attendance has improved, there are still too many pupils who are not in school regularly enough.

Leaders prioritise pupils' wider personal development. Pupils particularly enjoy the lunch and after-school clubs on offer, including dance, choir, Dungeons and Dragons, musical theatre, coding and a wide range of sports clubs.

Leaders and staff are passionate about their school. The trust and the academy council hold leaders fully to account for their work, including their work to improve the

curriculum. Staff feel that leaders are very considerate of their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and staff prioritise the safeguarding and protection of all pupils. Leaders make sure that all policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows how to put them into practice.

Staff recognise the signs of abuse and neglect and are quick to act if they are concerned about a pupil. Leaders work well with professionals outside the school to keep pupils safe. They are strong advocates for vulnerable families and pupils.

Adults teach pupils about how to stay safe and behave responsibly in different situations. This includes when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not given sufficient thought to the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and in what order they should learn it. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these subjects so that teachers have enough information to shape teaching and enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Too many pupils are not attending school as regularly as they should. Repeatedly missing the odd day means that these pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should continue with strategies to make sure pupils attend school every day, so that they benefit from all that the school has on offer and achieve well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142055
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10286279
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rob Pheasey
Principal	Mark Sherwin
Website	www.castercliffprimaryacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 and 26 April 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has significantly increased and numbers are still growing. A high proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language, and many are new to English. There is an increasing number of pupils with SEND.
- The school is a member of the Pendle Education Trust. This multi-academy trust has a quality and standards board made up of trustees. There is also chief executive officer for the trust and a local governing body, known as the academy council.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English and science. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and

looked at samples of pupils' work. She also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector spoke with pupils about their work and school life. She also talked with pupils about the books that they like to read, and heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with the principal. She also spoke with the assistant principal and associate lead, who are also the designated safeguarding leads. The inspector spoke with the leads for key stage 1, key stage 2 and early years, as well as the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector held discussions with members of staff, which focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with the chief education officer of the trust and members of the academy council, including the chair. She also talked to trustees, including those on the quality and standards committee.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, but the inspector spoke to pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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