

Inspection of Castle Primary School

Castle Street, Stoke-Sub-Hamdon, Somerset TA14 6RE

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this caring school. They feel happy and safe. Pupils feel that everyone is treated equally. Leaders ensure pupils are well prepared citizens. This means pupils learn to take responsibility from an early age. Pupils learn fundamental British values through weekly assemblies. They learn that they have 'choices and voices.' Pupils also know to value and listen to the opinions of others.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. They have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite and confident. Pupils and staff have strong bonds. This means pupils respond well to instructions. Pupils are also happy to ask any staff member for support. They know that their concerns are taken seriously.

Pupils are proud of their connection with the local community. The school council worked with the Parish Council to develop the local skate park. Pupils are also proud of the money they raise for charity. They develop an understanding of money through opportunities, such as the Year 6 'Apprentice' project.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school. They find leaders approachable. Most parents would recommend the school to other parents.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision. The new leadership team understands the school's priorities well. Leaders have prioritised curriculum development. For example, leaders have made significant improvements to the mathematics curriculum. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. These improvements mean the quality of education pupils now receive is stronger than is evident in the most recent published outcomes.

Children's love of reading begins in the early years. Children listen to nursery rhymes and classic stories. They are excited to repeat familiar phrases. Children learn phonics as soon as they start school. During independent reading, children use their phonetic knowledge to decipher words. This means they can read with fluency. Older pupils enjoy reading and read a wide range of authors. Pupils read about different cultures and religions. For example, through the books they read, pupils understand about historic religious discrimination. The books pupils read are matched to their ability.

Leaders have reorganised how mathematics is taught, so that the curriculum more precisely meets pupils' needs. The mathematics curriculum is now progressive and coherent. Teachers use assessment to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Targeted support is then provided to pupils to ensure they do not fall behind. Leaders know the importance of checking the curriculum for long term impact, so that outcomes improve.

The wider curriculum is well planned. Pupils are confident to talk about their learning in history. They make links between events in the past and modern times. Pupils are proud of their community. They are excited to share what they have learned about local history. Most staff have strong subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum effectively. However, some staff do not have precise subject knowledge. This means that in some subjects, pupils do not have the accurate knowledge they need to achieve well.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils with SEND learn the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders and teachers know the needs of pupils. This helps them to adapt learning for pupils with SEND when needed. There is also personalised adult support when required.

In the early years, children are happy and enjoy learning. Children deepen their mathematical learning through shape sorting activities. For example, they expertly group objects together to make them easier to count. Children use mathematical language to explain their learning. Staff communicate with parents frequently about their child's learning.

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to learning. Work in pupils' books is of a high standard. Pupils have roles and responsibilities, such as head boy and head girl, sports leaders and a school council, that help build their confidence and resilience. These pupils understand they are role models to others. Pupils are proud to have participated in a public speaking competition, which the school won. Pupils agree, 'you must be the best you can be and inspire others.'

Staff feel supported by leaders. Teachers appreciate working with other teachers across the trust. Their collaborative work helps them to manage workload and well-being. Trust leaders know the school well. They challenge and hold leaders to account. All stakeholders recognise the positive changes leaders have made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture. There is regular safeguarding training for staff. This means staff understand how to identify and report safeguarding concerns.

Leaders are quick to react when there are safeguarding concerns in the community. They work with pupils and families to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils learn to stay safe online. They know not to share personal information.

Leaders check that adults are suitable to work with pupils. The trust provides wider safeguarding support. Safeguarding records are regularly reviewed to ensure they are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the recent changes to the mathematics curriculum have developed pupils' learning, leaders should check the new curriculum continues to strengthen pupils' mathematical knowledge over time. Leaders should assess the impact of the new curriculum as it becomes implemented further. This will ensure it is securely embedded, so that pupils achieve well.
- Some staff do not have the expert subject knowledge to teach and support some subjects with precision. When this occurs, pupils do not have the accurate or essential knowledge they need. Leaders need to ensure all staff are well trained, so that pupils learn effectively in all curriculum areas.

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	141695
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10256690
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tess Gale
Headteacher	Steve Morton
Website	www.castleprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Redstart Learning Partnership.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school operates its own nursery provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection 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 inspectors met the designated safeguarding lead, checked the single central record of adults working in the school and looked at safeguarding records.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the special education needs coordinator.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspectors listened to pupils in Year 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspector also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jyotsna Paranjape

Ofsted Inspector

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