

Inspection of a good school: The Castle Nursery School

255A Barnsley Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 5NU

Inspection date: 14 September 2023

Outcome

The Castle Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Castle Nursery School is a happy, welcoming place. Children enjoy learning here. Parents spoken to say their children settle in quickly and love coming to school. The school is proud of children's regular attendance. Children and families form positive relationships with the caring adults who provide care for them.

The school is ambitious for children. Since the headteacher's appointment, many changes have taken place. All staff share a determination to provide exemplary care for the children. Children are encouraged to be curious and independent. The school's curriculum has been carefully planned to promote this, with communication and language development at the heart of all learning. The exciting learning opportunities offered, especially in the outside areas, enable all children to make good progress.

The school helps children to learn about feelings and emotions. They promote kind and caring behaviour. This supports children to learn how to play together. Consequently, behaviour is usually positive, and children play cooperatively. If they do 'fall out', most staff use these situations to discuss how this upsets others. However, sometimes the opportunities to help children understand the consequences of their behaviour are missed.

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

Leaders, at all levels across the school and federation, are passionate about the education of young children. They are knowledgeable about the statutory requirements for children in the early years. They have created a curriculum that supports children's learning from the first day they start school. The classrooms are bright and spacious. Children are encouraged to explore and be curious, as they play together. The newly refurbished outside areas provide exciting opportunities to climb, dig and investigate. Children enjoy negotiating the tree ramps, building in the sand area or 'cooking' in the mud kitchen.

The school is very clear about the importance of language development. A core spine of

books has been identified to help children listen to rhyme and rhythm and learn new vocabulary. The school's curriculum has been carefully planned to encourage children to learn new words. They can then use them as they learn about the world around them. However, visits to classrooms didn't always show the focus on language development that the school intends. Too often the carefully planned learning opportunities are not utilised well enough to promote talk. Some staff miss opportunities to model language or support children to extend sentences.

The school has recently adopted a new approach to teaching mathematics. Staff have received training and use the approach well to develop children's understanding of number. However, the approach is still in the early stages of implementation. There is still more to do to develop children's understanding of pattern and spatial awareness.

Supporting children's physical, personal, social and emotional development is threaded through daily activities in the school. The school's curriculum, in these areas, demonstrates that there is a strong understanding of child development. Children have many opportunities to develop their gross motor skills as they climb and run. Children are taught about health and self-care. The school is part of an oral hygiene programme, and children clean their teeth independently after lunch each day.

This is an inclusive school. Difference is celebrated. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are encouraged to learn together. The school has developed a specially resourced provision for children with complex needs. This provision tailors the curriculum to help all children achieve. Staff clearly understand children's additional needs. Parents speak highly of the care and support their children receive in the provision.

Currently, the school is re-establishing enrichment activities to promote children's wider personal development. Links to The Hepworth Gallery and the local park are used well to help children learn about the local area. Religious festivals, such as Eid and Diwali, are celebrated. Staff teach children to understand their own cultural heritage and respect others from different backgrounds or beliefs.

Everyone linked to the school is positive about improving the school further. They welcome positive changes. Staff are confident that all leaders, across the federation, place great importance on staff well-being and look for ways to reduce workload. Staff are proud to be part of The Castle Nursery team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's well-planned curriculum for developing communication, language and literacy is not always implemented as intended. This means that there are often missed

opportunities to engage children in talk and support their language development. The school should ensure that staff fully understand how to encourage, support and model talk to help children use new vocabulary and develop understanding of language structures.

- While monitoring systems are in place, they do not always identify where there is variation in practice. For example, not all incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with consistently. The school should ensure that all staff fully understand new approaches and implement them effectively.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	132014
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10290129
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matt Jackson
Headteacher	Kirsty Quinn
Website	www.crigglestonecastle.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Castle Nursery School is federated with Crigglestone Nursery School.
- The headteacher has been in post since November 2021.
- The Castle Nursery School has provision for two-year-old children.
- The Nursery has a specially resourced provision, The Garden Room, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision admits children who are Reception age with local authority support.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher and the federation deputy

headteachers, who were also subject leaders, and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss the quality of education, provision for children with special educational needs and safeguarding at the Nursery.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors focused on how the school met the requirements of the early years foundation stage curriculum. They carried out deep dives into communication, language and literacy (including early reading), mathematics and physical development and focused on how the school supported children’s personal, social and emotional development. Inspectors also considered the school’s work in other areas of learning.
- For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of learning sessions, spoke to teachers and talked to children about their activities and learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils’ and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to children’s personal development, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments, as well as responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.

Inspection team

Andrea Batley, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Philippa Kermotschuk

His Majesty’s Inspector

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