

Inspection of Castleton Primary School

Hillcrest Road, Castleton, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 2QD

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are highly valued at this school. Their well-being lies at the heart of the work that the school carries out. Pupils are taught about their rights. These rights are promoted and respected throughout school. Pupils know that their voice is heard and that adults will help them with any concerns that they might have.

Pupils speak to each other kindly and respectfully. Children in the early years proactively welcome visitors to their classroom. They are keen to introduce themselves and their friends. Pupils are confident and happy.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, these are not consistently realised, particularly in those subjects which have published results. The curriculum in the early years is not developed sufficiently well to ensure that children gain the knowledge that they need to be ready for Year 1 and beyond. While the curriculum for Year 1 to Year 6 has been carefully designed, pupils do not learn it in depth and therefore do not build a robust body of knowledge over time.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular clubs on offer. Some pupils are offered a golden ticket to encourage them to join a specific activity, such as 'lunchtime mindfulness'. The school has carefully considered its programme to help pupils prepare for life in modern Britain. This includes participating in a wide range of recognition days, such as the International Day of Disabled Persons and learning about various cultural and religious celebrations, such as Diwali.

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

The school has created an ambitious curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6. In most subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge that pupils will learn and when this will be taught. However, in some subjects, there is too much content for pupils to learn. This results in pupils not having sufficient time or opportunity to deepen their learning. Therefore, they are unable to remember or apply their learning when they are introduced to new concepts.

Mostly, pupils benefit from carefully considered opportunities to revisit their prior learning. This helps them understand new learning. However, on occasion, the activities that teachers design do not help pupils learn the key information that has been set out. This leads to fragmented learning. It means that, in some subjects, pupils' knowledge is not secure.

Teachers carry out checks to see how well pupils have learned the curriculum. They use this information to identify where pupils have not grasped key information. This informs future teaching and helps to tackle misconceptions.

The school has a keen focus on ensuring that children learn the phonics code quickly and accurately. Those who attend the Nursery class learn to recognise different sounds, such as rhyming words. Children in the Reception Year start to learn letter

sounds. Pupils' learning continues into Year 1, where they learn more complex letter combinations and words. Pupils enjoy early success by reading books that contain the sounds that they know. Any pupils who do not keep up with the intended pace of the programme are helped to catch up. Pupils gain the reading knowledge that they need to access other subject curriculums successfully.

Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading. They understand the value of being a keen reader and they benefit from the wide range of different texts that the school provides for them.

While children gain strong foundations in learning to read, this is not replicated in many other areas of learning in the early years. This is because the school has not set out what children should learn. As a result, children's learning is largely based on the completion of isolated activities that do not help them to deepen their knowledge over time. This hinders their readiness for Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Where appropriate, the school sources external support to meet pupils' needs and to learn good practice from professionals. Staff and pupils make sure that members of the school community feel included, regardless of any differences that people may have. This is the lived experience around school. Pupils with SEND are fully integrated into the life of the school. The school makes sensible decisions to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate for pupils' needs.

Many pupils take up the opportunity to hold a responsibility or position of leadership. Mental health ambassadors, school councillors and advocates for pupils' rights represent the pupil voice across the school. Pupils appreciate that their opinions are sought and listened to. The school understands and promotes the importance of physical and mental wellness. Pupils learn about relevant issues to enhance their well-being and safety, such as positive body image workshops, online safety and information on the negative effects of vaping.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and most do so every day. However, the school has identified that there are still some pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. The school analyses the reasons for these absences carefully and has put robust measures in place to support families and pupils.

Around school, pupils are polite and considerate. For example, pupils hold doors open for visitors and are proud to show them around their school. Children in the early years listen carefully to the teachers' instructions. They play cooperatively with each other.

Through discussions with staff, the school makes sure that any changes do not have a negative impact on workload. The well-being team regularly consults with staff to ensure that their perspective is considered.

Many governors have the appropriate knowledge and expertise to carry out their roles effectively. This is helping them to hold the school to account. They have a

clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop, particularly in relation to the curriculum.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. They said that they appreciate the support that they receive from the staff. Parents said that the school supports and cares for their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, there is too much content for pupils to know and remember. This means that they learn some information at surface level only and do not fully understand key concepts in some curriculums. This prevents some pupils from building a rich body of knowledge over time. The school should refine the key knowledge that they want pupils to gain so that pupils have a secure foundation on which to build when they meet new concepts.
- In some subjects, the school has not considered effectively enough how pupils will learn the curriculum that has been set out. At times, the activities that teachers deliver do not help pupils learn the knowledge that the school has identified. This results in pupils' learning being fragmented and many do not understand key concepts. The school should make sure that lesson activities support pupils in building a secure body of knowledge across the curriculum.
- The school has not clearly identified the key knowledge that children will learn through the early years curriculum. As result, children do not gain all of the knowledge that they need to be prepared for their learning in Year 1 and beyond. The school should ensure that the content of the early years curriculum is clearly defined, understood and delivered effectively.

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	105765
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10256030
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vicky Fee
Headteacher	Lindsay Torrance
Website	www.castleton-rochdale.frogos.net
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been recent changes to leadership roles, including the early years leader and the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo). The school has undergone recent significant staffing changes.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school runs an on-site breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher and the early years leader. They also met with other subject leaders in school. An inspector held a discussion with the SENDCo.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and members of the governing body. She also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, design technology and history. For each deep dive, this involved holding discussions about the curriculum, reviewing curriculum documentation, visiting a sample of lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. They looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed several pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 reading to a known adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes. An inspector visited the school breakfast club. Inspectors discussed behaviour with pupils, parents and staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff and pupils. An inspector spoke to parents as they collected their children from school. Inspectors also took account of the responses from Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including minutes from governing body meetings, attendance records and records analysing behaviour.
- 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' interest first.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Pamela Potter	Ofsted Inspector

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