

# Inspection of Castle Hill Primary School

Halifax Road, Todmorden, West Yorkshire OL14 5SQ

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 April 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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?**

Castle Hill Primary is an inclusive school. Pupils feel safe and listened to. They are keen to attend school and enjoy their lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. The school supports families well. This starts with the warm welcome staff give to families each morning. Pupils say that any adult in school will help them resolve issues.

The school has high expectations for pupils to achieve well. Pupils are proud of their learning and keen to share their success. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Teaching and resources are adapted to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included fully in lessons. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities. The school has recently introduced additional clubs, such as football and netball. Pupils talk excitedly about experiences such as a York Dungeon visit and a Roman actor in school. The school has recently taken part in competitive sporting activities with other schools. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in forest school activities.

Outside, pupils play well together. They have a range of equipment to enjoy at playtimes. There is extra adult support to enable pupils with SEND to join in all activities successfully.

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

The school has designed a bespoke curriculum. It is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. In more established subject areas, leaders develop their subject knowledge using external networks. They train teachers in school to deliver the curriculum with confidence. Pupils learn the skills and knowledge they need to remember important subject information. However, in some subjects, subject leadership is at an earlier stage of development. Some leaders lack the knowledge they need to support the ongoing development of their subjects. In addition, the school has not developed a consistent approach to assessment in all subjects. As a result, teachers and leaders do not have the information they need to identify and address gaps in learning rapidly enough.

The curriculum begins effectively in Nursery. Staff prioritise the development of children's language and vocabulary. Staff across the early years support children's development well. Children learn to work and play together independently. Children gain a secure start on which to build as they progress through school.

The school has recently introduced a new scheme for teaching phonics. This has had a positive impact on how well pupils learn to read. Clear teaching routines ensure that pupils make rapid progress. This includes pupils with SEND. Teachers explore the meaning of unfamiliar words with pupils daily. Pupils gain new language quickly

and develop a better understanding of what they are reading. Staff encourage pupils to read challenging texts in their weekly library session.

The school has established effective systems to identify and address the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with the support and training they need to help these pupils thrive. Teachers adapt learning activities for pupils who need additional support. As a result, most pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers and achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They are attentive in lessons and calm when moving around the school. At social times, pupils are respectful towards each other. When issues arise, staff intervene quickly. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They want to do well and to please the adults in school. Pupils are happy to come to school. Attendance is above the national average rate for primary schools. The school tracks attendance through effective systems. Additional, targeted support for some pupils and their families is helping to improve attendance overall.

Pupils' well-being is a priority in this school. Warm relationships underpin high expectations. Restorative practice and open communication help to resolve issues. The school has recently recruited pupil anti-bullying ambassadors. There are opportunities for pupils to have leadership roles in school. They can become librarians, members of the communication team or house captains. Pupils know which skills they need to become leaders. Staff support them to develop the roles they have. Pupils make links between these skills and the jobs they may have in the future.

The personal, social, health and citizenship education and religious education curriculums are designed to teach pupils about being citizens in modern Britain. Sometimes, this content is not delivered in depth. Pupils do not have a clear understanding of different religions. They do not learn enough about the diversity of modern Britain.

Leaders, including governors, have a shared vision for the future of the school. There is a clear plan to empower leaders and improve outcomes across the school. Outcomes are currently in line with, or slightly above, national outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Governors know the school well. They have a range of backgrounds and skills that enable them to support the school effectively. Staff feel supported. They say their workload and well-being are considered well by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders lack the level of knowledge they need to develop their subject effectively. As a result, teachers do not receive the support they need to deliver these subjects confidently. The school should ensure that all subject leaders can develop their knowledge and understanding of their roles through being part of external networks linked to their subject. This will enable them to enhance the existing curriculum and to deliver training to all staff across the school.
- The school does not have consistent systems in place to check pupils' curriculum understanding. As a result, staff do not have the information they need to accurately identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that new assessment systems are applied consistently and enable leaders and staff to identify and address gaps in pupils' understanding 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 107520   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Calderdale   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10320342   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 181  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Mary Carrigan  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Duncan Hetherington  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.castlehillprimary.co.uk">www.castlehillprimary.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 27 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                     |

## Information about this school

- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of the headteacher in January 2024.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club and provides after-school care.

## 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspectors also met with a representative from the local authority and other leaders within the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and local authority school improvement visit minutes.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Haunch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mel Garlick

Ofsted Inspector

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