

# Inspection of a school judged Good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Castle Hill Infant School

Dryden Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 6QD

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

## Outcome

Castle Hill Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jennifer Smith. This school is part of the Asset Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Clare Flintoff, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Evans-Evans.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this welcoming school. They demonstrate that they are ready, respectful and safe through their positive relationships with trusted adults and their peers. Pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers help make learning come to life, for example following gingerbread crumbs to find the gingerbread man or recreating the Great Fire of London.

The school's learning knights, including 'Knight Thinks-a-Lot', embody the school's high expectations. Pupils rise to these. They have positive attitudes to their work. Consequently, most pupils achieve and behave well. However, a few pupils do not attend school as frequently as they should. They therefore miss the range of activities and opportunities that the school offers them.

Pupils are fully aware of the school's PRIDE values of passion, resilience, integrity, determination and equity. They work hard to achieve and display these values every day. They appreciate the weekly assemblies, which celebrate their successes in demonstrating these values.

Pupils have imaginative opportunities to widen their learning, for example visiting a local 'enchanted kingdom' to write creatively. Pupils extend their talents and interests through learning to play musical instruments. They attend a range of extra-

curricular clubs to extend their talents and interests. These include photography, mindfulness and construction.

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

The school has embedded a curriculum that is broad, ambitious and inclusive. With the themes of 'nurture, engage, inspire and achieve' at its heart, many pupils are successful. They are ready for their next steps.

This curriculum clearly identifies the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember. There is a consistent approach used across the school. For example, each topic begins with a 'stunning start'. At the end of each term, pupils share their learning with parents through a 'fabulous finish'. These include history exhibitions, productions and science fairs.

In the Reception Year, children build strong foundations for their future learning. Teachers ensure that they stretch pupils' language and communication at every opportunity. Effective adult interaction enables pupils to build their socialisation and communication skills. They are ready for Year 1.

The school prioritises reading. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. They learn through fun, interactive and engaging lessons. Children confidently articulate sounds and blend them together to read simple and then more complex words. Pupils' progress is closely checked. Effective support is quickly provided for those who need help to keep up. This means that many pupils learn to read confidently and fluently by the time they leave.

In most lessons, the well-chosen tasks help pupils to learn and make meaningful links to what they already know. However, some pupils do not routinely receive tasks that deepen their understanding or build successfully on their prior learning. This means they are not able to develop more complex ideas and knowledge as well as they might.

The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. The school expertly identifies pupils' individual needs and provides them with effective and appropriate support. Teachers ensure that classroom adaptations enable pupils with SEND to access and succeed in the same learning as their peers.

All pupils within the school's special educational needs unit have education, health and care (EHC) plans. They follow a broad curriculum with appropriately tailored adaptations. As a result, pupils who attend the unit achieve well from their various starting points.

The school works closely with families to raise pupils' attendance. However, some pupils do not attend school often enough. This means they miss essential learning and key aspects of personal development.

The school has carefully embedded pupils' broader development within the subjects and texts they study. For example, pupils learn about a diverse range of historical characters

and different faiths and cultures. Pupils learn that, while people may be different, everyone has key values in common. This helps pupils to be ready for life in modern Britain.

The opportunities for pupils to engage in outdoor play and learning encourage them to use and improve their imagination. Pupils develop their communication and socialisation skills well. They engage in role play, read and build together. These activities help to improve their vocabulary and raise their self-confidence.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They say they are very well supported in terms of their workload and well-being. The trust's 'complete human strategy' supports staff's, pupils' and parents' mental health and well-being.

The trust has detailed oversight of the school's work. It is focused on the school's priorities for further development. It provides the school with effective challenge and support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Sometimes, the activities that pupils are given to complete do not build effectively on prior learning, nor sufficiently extend pupils' knowledge. This hinders some pupils from achieving the highest outcomes across the curriculum. The school should ensure that all pupils are routinely given the most appropriate tasks to ensure that they build on what they already know, and can deepen their knowledge and thinking further still.
- A few pupils, including some disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss valuable learning, and their ability to build their knowledge securely over time is impaired. The school should ensure that it strengthens its attendance work with families so that all pupils attend school frequently and fully benefit from the range of opportunities and experiences that the school provides.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 2019.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141372
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345398
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	214
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Simon Evans-Evans
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Claire Flintoff
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castlehillprimary.org.uk">www.castlehillprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has an assessment centre and a special educational needs unit for 24 pupils. All pupils attending the unit have an EHC plan.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school uses the services of one registered provider of alternative provision.
- The school shares a headteacher and members of the leadership team with Castle Hill Junior School.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- The inspector met with school leaders, the chief executive officer, the deputy chief executive officer, trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector considered the 40 responses and free-text comments made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. The lead inspector gathered views of staff, pupils and parents by speaking with them during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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