

Inspection of Castle Hill Primary School

Abbotswood Road, Brockworth, Gloucester, Gloucestershire GL3 4NU

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| Inspection dates: | 29 and 30 April 2025 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Castle Hill primary is a friendly and welcoming community. The school's vision, 'Do with not for', underpins its approach of working together in the best interests of everyone in the school community.

The school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils behave exceptionally well. They listen well to adults and their peers. Pupils are polite and respectful to visitors.

Across the school, pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. The school has high expectations for its pupils. This starts in the early years, where children get off to a flying start. Learning in Reception Year prepares children well for Year 1. At each stage pupils consistently meet the school's expectations. Consequently, by the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve well, especially in English and mathematics.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school provides to broaden their experiences beyond the classroom. This includes a range of trips and visits. They enjoy attending extra-curricular clubs such as football, art and dance where they develop their talents and interests. Pupils take on leadership responsibilities such as being a school councillor or on the eco team. This helps them to learn about responsibility.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and interesting. It is designed to help pupils to build their knowledge over time. In most subjects, it identifies the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. In those subjects, a focus on staff development means that teachers have strong subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations and use questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding. This helps pupils to learn new content and to develop a secure understanding of the ideas taught.

Nevertheless, in a few subjects, the school is refining the curriculum. In these subjects, the curriculum and its delivery does not help pupils to build their knowledge securely. This means pupils do not recall their previous learning and build on what they already know.

The school has clear systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Support strategies and records are accurate and precise. Teachers adapt the curriculum, when necessary, to help pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum alongside their peers.

The school has effective systems to check what pupils know and remember. These identify misconceptions or gaps in pupils' understanding. Teachers use this information well to identify the next steps that pupils need to take.

Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Most pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Teachers identify effectively any pupils who begin to struggle, and

work determinedly to help them catch up. As a result, pupils learn to read with increasing fluency and confidence.

In the early years, children are confident and independent learners. Staff are knowledgeable and passionate about how young children learn. They support children well. Children in the early years demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes and a thirst for learning.

The school's 'diamond rules' help pupils to understand the expectations for behaviour. Leaders take quick and effective action to support pupils who need additional support to learn how to behave well. Pupils are courteous and respectful of one another. They are enthusiastic and keen to attend school.

Pupils learn to stay safe, in school, in the community and online. They learn about healthy relationships and know what it means to be a good friend. Pupils know that there are trusted adults to talk to if they have a worry. As a result, they feel safe.

Pupils learn about democracy. They vote for school council representatives and older pupils visit the Houses of Parliament. This helps pupils to understand that voting gives everyone a voice and is a fair process. However, pupils have a limited understanding of some of the other fundamental British values. Likewise, some pupils have a limited understanding of different religions. This does not prepare them as well as it could for life in modern Britain.

There have been recent and significant changes at the school. This includes changes to senior leadership, curriculum leadership, staffing and governors. Nonetheless, the school has continued to strive to improve. In some areas of the curriculum, there is not a clear oversight of how effectively the subject curriculum is implemented. Consequently, the school does not identify where there is need for further staff development.

Governors are ambitious for the school. They are taking action to renew and strengthen systems for providing challenge and support.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school. They value and appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, where the curriculum is being refined, it is not as well designed and implemented effectively as in core subjects. Where this occurs, pupils do not build their

knowledge securely. The school should ensure that the wider curriculum is structured and implemented effectively so that pupils develop their knowledge more securely.

- In some areas of the curriculum, leadership does not have consistent oversight of the impact of the subject curriculum. This means that the implementation of some wider curriculum subjects does not deepen pupils' knowledge as well as it could. The school should ensure that curriculum leadership accurately evaluates the quality of education provided and supports staff development so that the curriculum is delivered effectively in all subjects.

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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| Unique reference number | 115569 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 10374098 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 211 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Kate Shields |
| Headteacher | Karen Ettrick |
| Website | www.castlehill.gloucs.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 11 and 12 December 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- There have been changes to leadership at all levels in the past academic year. The current headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in April 2025 after undertaking a period of acting headship at the school. The acting deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, joined the school in September 2024. In addition, there have been recent changes to the governing body including the chair of governors who was appointed to the role in September 2024.
- The school use one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools

receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, curriculum leaders, groups of staff and other members of the school's leadership team.
- An inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, looked at samples of work and spoke to some pupils about their 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Nicky McMahon, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Malcolm Willis

Ofsted Inspector

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