

Castle Hill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102563
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	308049
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	462
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	11
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jennie Walters
Headteacher	Mrs Chris Wansborough
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Buckland Road Chessington KT9 1JE
Telephone number	020 8397 3951
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school was formed in September 2007 when an existing infant and nursery school expanded to accommodate pupils from a nearby junior school which closed. The new school, renamed Castle Hill, operated on two sites until September 2008. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background, and others come from a wide range of ethnic heritages. An average proportion have first languages other than English, most commonly Tamil, Portuguese and French. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than usual. Of these, the largest group comprises pupils with statements of speech, language and communication needs, and there are two speech and language units at the school to accommodate them. There are smaller groups of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs and those with moderate learning difficulties. The school has achieved a large number of awards, including the Healthy School Award, I CAN accreditation for speech and language provision, Artsmark and Sportsmark. Governors manage a Children's Centre on-site, and there is a privately-run on-site playgroup and a before- and after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which promotes pupils' academic and personal development well. The headteacher and her staff have successfully managed the transition to a primary school. One parent commented, 'They have handled the merger of the two schools very well with the least upheaval for the children.' As a result, pupils feel confident and make good progress.

Leaders and managers raise attainment throughout the school by accurately assessing and tracking the progress of all pupils, and providing extra help where necessary. In Key Stage 1, pupils reach average standards from starting points which are well below expected levels. This shows that pupils make good progress from Nursery to the end of Year 2. Key Stage 2 pupils joined the new primary school only in September 2007 and the school began to track their progress from then. The school quickly identified that some of these pupils had gaps in their knowledge and skills and provided effective extra help for these pupils. This enabled Year 6 pupils, during their first year at the school, to reach standards which were above the national average in English and broadly average in mathematics. The school's tracking data show that pupils currently in Years 3 to 6 make good progress overall, reaching standards in line with the national average.

The school gives every pupil the chance to participate in all aspects of school life. It provides good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those at an early stage of learning English. As a result, these pupils make similarly good progress to that of others. Pupils who have speech and language difficulties receive very effective specialist support and, as one parent commented, are 'fully integrated into the mainstream class'. In this supportive and inclusive environment, pupils' personal development and well-being are fostered well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted effectively. Assemblies focus on values, such as the importance of friendship. Pupils respond by being respectful to one another and behaving well in lessons and around the school. The school has improved pupils' attendance, which is now average. Pupils enjoy learning, and the curriculum provides exciting opportunities for them to learn through interlinked topics. In one Year 3 class, for example, pupils used a walk round their local area to learn about geography and people of other faiths.

This is a good community school which works in successful partnership with a variety of outside agencies. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to join in such activities as the popular 'stay and play' sessions in the well-run Children's Centre. Though a small minority of parents express some concern that play areas around the temporary classrooms are not always safe, the number of playground incidents is low and the school provides a good range of activities to compensate for the reduced space in the playground.

Overall, teaching and learning are good. Most teachers expect a great deal from pupils and encourage them to work to the best of their ability. In a few cases in Key Stage 2, teachers provide work that is less challenging and which relies too heavily on worksheets. The newness of this key stage means that the information from leaders' monitoring has not yet been used sufficiently to eliminate these inconsistencies. Teachers set effective targets for pupils, which help them to understand the progress they are making, enabling them to make good progress overall. In one lesson seen, pupils assessed their own and one another's work in a mature way, and this enabled them to make faster progress than in other lessons seen, because pupils were

more engaged and better motivated to improve. The school has rightly identified the need to make this approach more widespread.

The headteacher provides strong leadership which is enabling the school to achieve a high degree of unity in a short period. School leaders, governors and managers understand their school well, and share a vision for its future, which is clearly summed up in the school's mission statement: 'Learning and achievement for all'. Given its track record, it is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, which has a direct impact on children's learning, motivation and engagement. They are happy, and feel safe and secure. The school meets their welfare needs well. Key workers have a good knowledge of the children in their care and observe their progress in a variety of ways, including the use of photographs and focused observations. In this supportive environment children make good progress from starting points which are generally well below expected levels of language and communication skills. By the end of Reception they are well on their way to acquiring the skills expected for five-year-olds. The activities led by adults effectively promote children's learning, and frequent discussions with children help them to develop fluency. Children gain good social skills as they interact with one another and develop good levels of independence. They use their increasing confidence well to select their own activities. The provision is well led and the leader of the EYFS provides an excellent role model in teaching. There are too few opportunities for children's writing. Staff recognise this, and plans are in hand to extend writing opportunities across all areas of learning. There are effective assessment systems, which support the children's next steps in their learning. Resources are well deployed, and the outside learning environment is stimulating and exciting in supporting the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that monitoring is used to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching in Key Stage 2.
- Improve pupils' ability to assess their own and each other's work, in order to help them see for themselves how it could be better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average by the time pupils leave the school, and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress throughout the EYFS and Key Stage 1 from starting points which are well below expected levels. Good tracking systems and effective support enable more pupils than usual to gain the highest level for their age. Based on data for pupils in Key Stage 2 since they joined the school in September 2007, they make good progress overall, particularly in English and science, reaching standards in line with national expectations. School data for Year 6 pupils show that an unusually high proportion achieved the highest level in English for their age, as a result of well-targeted support. Pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties, and those for whom English is not their first language, make good progress because of effective support. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of schooling through a strong focus on promoting their basic skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils value the friendships they form with one another, and treat staff and visitors with respect. One spoke for many by saying, 'we work together as a team', and another described school as a 'fun community'. There is little bullying, and any incidents are dealt with quickly. Behaviour is good, and pupils strive hard to attain the highly desired 'Cool Awards' because 'you have to work really hard for them'. Pupils know why regular exercise and a balanced diet are important, and they eat fruit regularly, because 'it helps you with vitamins'. Older pupils particularly relish Fruity Fridays where they enjoy trying different kinds of fruit, 'not just apples'. They make a good contribution to the local community through projects such as carol singing and bulb planting. Some pupils assume responsibility for others by running clubs and acting as house captains. The school does not fully develop pupils' initiative and leadership skills, and the school council has limited say in the running of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships between adults and pupils in most classes are warm. One parent summed up the views of many in commenting that 'staff care about my child'. Pupils make good progress because most teachers expect a great deal from them and set tasks with a good level of challenge. The quality of lessons is uniformly good or better in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. It is mostly good in Key Stage 2, but some teachers set less challenging work than others, and the school recognises the need to monitor teaching more closely to ensure consistency. Teachers manage their classes well, and pupils respond by behaving well and working hard. Lessons are well planned. Pupils understand clearly what they will be learning and effectively revise what they have learnt. However, some pupils learn less quickly than others and make less progress in lessons, because they are insufficiently involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support pupils' individual needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has an effective emphasis on the core skills of literacy, numeracy and science, and contributes significantly to good outcomes in pupils' achievement. The curriculum is well matched to different pupils' needs, so that they are all fully included. Information and communication technology is used well to develop independent learning skills. A stimulating programme of educational visits, clubs and exciting enrichment activities contributes considerably to pupils' interest and enjoyment. Creative links are now bringing the curriculum alive for younger pupils, but are insufficiently developed for pupils in Key Stage 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

As one pupil said, staff 'take care of you really well'. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are firmly in place, and health and safety checks are carried out regularly. The school has considerable in-house expertise in working with vulnerable pupils and those with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities. It works successfully with a range of service providers to ensure good care and support for these pupils. There is good support for those who join the school at a later stage, in particular those who have little or no spoken English. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently well, offering constructive advice on how they can improve. Teachers give pupils clear targets for improvement, which they know and use to help them reach the next level. Pupils are insufficiently involved in assessing their own and one another's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers have responded well to the challenge of incorporating older pupils into their school. The energetic headteacher and her effective senior leadership team share a clear vision for the future of the school. They recognise the need to use their monitoring of teaching and learning more sharply to ensure consistency throughout the school. Good systems are in place to track pupils' progress, and this is helping to raise achievement. The school provides challenging targets for achievement in Year 6, and these were exceeded in 2008. The school is perceptive in the evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. Governors have played an effective part in securing an orderly transition. They support the school well and are ready to hold it to account. The school promotes community cohesion effectively by welcoming the local community into the school and by encouraging pupils to value diversity and promote shared values. As a result, the school's reputation in the community is growing.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill School, Chessington, KT9 1JE

You may remember that three inspectors recently visited your school. We were impressed by how friendly and welcoming you all were. We were pleased to see how well you behaved, not just in lessons, but around the school. You are sensible in using the restricted outdoor areas well, even though some of you wish the playground could be bigger! We like the way so many of you run clubs for your fellow pupils, and this is a very thoughtful way of helping others. It shows that your school means what it says in its mission statement, to give you 'opportunities to gain self-respect and to value others' in your community.

You are fortunate to go to a good school which cares for you well and helps you to make good progress. Your school helps you to develop into confident young people who take an interest in the world around them and respect the values of others. Your lessons are interesting and you have very good opportunities to develop your other interests, such as cookery or Spanish or music. An exciting feature of your school is the new creative curriculum, which enables you to study topics in depth and to visit the places you learn about.

Your teachers work hard for you and teach you well. We have asked those in charge to make sure that all of you in Years 3 to 6 are set work that fully challenges you. We noticed that in lessons when you had the chance to assess your own and your classmates' work that you were more motivated and made better progress. We have asked your school to give you more opportunities to do this in the future. The adults in charge have such good systems in place for checking your progress that I am sure it will not be long before these improvements happen. You can help by working as hard as you can and collecting as many 'Learning to be Clever' awards as possible!

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power

Lead Inspector