

# Castle Hill Junior School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116005
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312143
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nicola Davies

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John D F Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Greenbank Winklebury Way Basingstoke RG23 8BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 473777
<b>Fax number</b>	01256 330332

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 January 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	312143

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This popular two-form entry junior school is located on the outskirts of Basingstoke. Most pupils transfer from the adjoining infant school but the school also attracts pupils from outside its immediate area. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities.

The school has gained many awards for aspects of its work including three Charter Marks for Excellence.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Castle Hill Juniors is a good school with many outstanding features. The upbeat and uplifting ethos of the school inspires its proud pupils to do well and engenders the confidence and respect of their parents. This permeates the work of the school and creates a community where the contributions of children and adults are noted, nurtured and celebrated. Pupils benefit from exceptionally wide opportunities to learn new skills and succeed. This includes the excellent formal curriculum and the myriad 'extra' activities and additional responsibilities on offer. One example is the school's allotment club, where pupils learn about healthy living through growing organic fruit and vegetables. Another is the school Senate, just one of the ways that pupils contribute to the school community. Added to this, pupils are extremely well cared for, guided and supported by the staff team. As one parent commented, 'All of the staff, from the headteacher, teachers, administration staff, learning support staff, kitchen staff and caretaker are helpful, approachable and dedicated in their work at the school'. The result is confident and mature pupils who happily 'aim for excellence' and enjoy school enormously as a result.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and the standards which they reach are consistently above average. This is the result of the good, imaginative teaching they receive. Staff are determined that neither they nor their pupils should 'stand still'. For example, pupils who are particularly able or talented benefit from work which challenges them well alongside additional activities that help foster their particular talents. Similarly, the school provides very well organised and thoughtful small group support for pupils who find aspects of learning more difficult. As a result, pupils do well, whatever their starting points. Staff are extremely thorough in their approach to teaching, but pupils do not always have enough opportunities to 'push' themselves through activities that help them to learn independently. This means that, on occasions, some pupils do not achieve as much as they could in lessons.

Since the time of the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in improving writing and the use of information and communication technology (ICT). It has invested in ICT facilities and resources, which are used very well to stimulate pupils and support their learning. Staff have made writing exciting and the success of their work can be seen in the most recent national tests results in English where nearly all pupils reached national expectations in the subject and over half exceeded them. Such success in identifying and taking action on its relatively weaker areas, as well as celebrating and sharing its many strengths, is an indicator of the excellent quality of leadership and management. Inspired by the outstanding headteacher and his passion for excellence, staff are fully involved in school development. This provides the school with its excellent platform to continue growing, adapting and improving.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils have consistent opportunities to learn independently.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils join the school with standards that are in line with, or above the expectations for their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently above average and demonstrate pupils' good progress from their starting points.

Within this picture of good overall achievement, the school is alert to differences in progress that pupils make as they go through the school. For example, staff noted that attainment and progress in English by the end of Year 6 was less good than in other subjects and swiftly took successful action to address this. Similarly, the school has identified that, in national test results in 2007, fewer pupils made good progress in mathematics than in either English or science. Whilst very effective individual pupil tracking has been a key feature of the work of the school for many years, the school recently invested in a new way of making this information more easily accessible and comprehensive. This is helping staff smooth out 'ups and downs' in the academic performance of its pupils. However, the school rightly recognises there is still some work to be done to make the very best use of this information in monitoring and target setting.

The school tracks the progress of different groups of pupils and there are no significant differences between, for example, how well boys and girls achieve. High quality small group support for pupils with specific learning difficulties means they make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils share 'moments of calm' throughout the school day, they pray together, are culturally aware, socially mature and love their school. As a result, they feel exceptionally safe and well cared for. As one commented, 'Our teachers are really loving and caring ... I know I won't be bullied here'. New pupils are reassured by their personal Year 6 buddies, whom they know they can rely on to be there if they feel lonely or worried. Among its many awards, the school has enhanced Healthy Schools status and pupils are very committed to ways to keep healthy in body and mind.

Pupils talk animatedly about their lessons, their teachers, their friends and their clubs. Attendance is above average. Both in and out of lessons, behaviour is outstanding, as are manners. Pupils and staff share a passion for fairness, which helps prepare pupils very well for their role in society. For example, pupils look forward to preparing their own presentations for the elections for various school positions that take place regularly. The school Senate and class councils work together to represent pupils' views and take a full part in improving the school. Their most recent project is the purchase of an electronic drum kit, and sessions on this will take their place alongside other imaginative rewards for pupils' particular effort. Their concern for others stretches out to global issues. For example, children collected nearly £6,000 for the Tsunami appeal, which was matched by a local business partner. Such good links with local communities and businesses, along with pupils' good academic and excellent social skills, prepare them very well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are planned thoroughly to meet the needs of the range of abilities within each class. In English and mathematics, groups are often organised by ability and engage pupils in tasks that challenge and help them to make good progress. The teachers maintain a good pace to learning and often make very good use of ICT and other resources to interest and excite pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson, a silent animation provided pupils with an engaging stimulus to create their own playscripts, whilst in Year 3, pupils used imaginative adjectives excitedly as part of their project to discover buried treasure. As yet, not all lessons provide pupils with good

opportunities to work independently and this is an inconsistency in the teaching across the school.

The teachers use their knowledge and skills very effectively, often questioning the pupils incisively to deepen their understanding. This was particularly evident in a lesson where pupils were learning about how artists arrange the subject of still life paintings. Relationships between teachers and the pupils are very good. The school's dual aims of fostering respect and seeking excellence permeates lessons. As a result, where pupils are occasionally inattentive they are quickly reminded of the high expectations of their behaviour and respond with great maturity.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's exciting curriculum is a real strength. Basic skills are well planned and taught and the school's adaptations to meet the particular needs of different groups of pupils are first class. For example, small group work for pupils facing difficulties includes just the right mix of adult support and independent activities. In addition, as pupils say, 'Learning is fun.' The curriculum really enthuses them, whether they are predicting the contents of Pandora's box in literacy, taking part in an online archaeology tutorial or choosing between, for example, 3D modelling or rugby as their activities for the popular 'Friday Fun' sessions

Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide variety of experiences such as residential trips, visits, special weeks, competitions and clubs. These keep the curriculum fresh and develop pupils' all-round skills well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported by adults and each other. In this inclusive school, the physical, emotional, learning or behavioural needs of pupils are swiftly identified and very well met. Parents are involved very well, leading one to comment, 'My family were extremely well supported when my son started to show signs of having special needs'. Individual education plans are written in child friendly language and pupils take a full part in setting their own goals and targets. This involvement of pupils in identifying their own targets is part of the well established school procedures for providing academic and pastoral guidance. Termly academic targets are set by teachers and sent home to parents. Teachers' marking helps pupils know how to improve and they involve pupils well in marking and assessing their own and each others work. Writing buddies are one successful example of this approach.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding leadership and management and first class team work has had an excellent impact on many areas of school life. All staff regularly evaluate the education that the school offers. For example, led by the able deputy, staff are closely involved in refining the very good target setting systems for each individual pupil. The impact of their shared determination not to stand still can be seen in the continued improvement since the time of the last inspection, along with the marked success of current initiatives, such as developing writing. Governors make a good contribution by bringing the benefits of their wide professional and personal experience to bear on the school.

The leaders make good use of the school's financial resources, its very good relationship with parents and its excellent local partnerships to create a first class environment for pupils and adults, which promotes achievement and enhances learning.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### 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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill Junior School, Basingstoke, RG23 8BN

Thank you so much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Your headteacher had explained to us just how proud all the staff are of you, your excellent manners and all your achievements and we were delighted to see that this was all true. We were able to sample some of the exciting activities you undertake and understood why you are so enthusiastic about school. You do well in your studies because you have really interesting things to learn about and good teaching. We saw that the school takes excellent care of you and that you all take very good care of yourselves and of each other. We were very impressed with all the ways you help the school. Your experiences as school senators, team captains, buddies, organic gardeners and lunchtime office workers help you grow into very mature and confident young people. So well done! We were very sorry to have missed the children and teachers in Year 6, but we found out lots about what they do too, so be sure to let them know they weren't forgotten while they were working hard and having fun in Fareham.

Your teachers, governors and parents are just as enthusiastic about the school as you are. We agree with them that you go to a good school and many things about the school are 'fantastic' or, as we say, outstanding. You can read more about these in the report that accompanies this letter.

When I was talking to your headteacher, he told me that he was looking forward to our visit as it would be a good way of seeing just how well the school is doing and spotting anything that could be better. Listening to you, sharing some of your lessons and looking at your work we spotted that sometimes you could have more opportunities to make choices and decisions about your learning so that you make the best possible progress. This happens very well sometimes so your teachers are already thinking about how they can make this happen even more regularly.

You and the staff made us all feel very welcome. Thank you for helping us get to know your school and please pass on our thanks to all the adults too.

With best wishes for your continued success

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector