

Inspection of Castle Hill Infant School

Greenbank, Winklebury Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG23 8BN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Castle Hill Infant School. They know that staff care for and respect them. This is an inclusive school where all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside each other. Parents are full of praise for the school, describing it as, 'an amazing school that has fostered a love of learning'.

Pupils benefit from a broad range of wider opportunities, including sports clubs, and opportunities to learn outside in the exciting outdoor environments. They enjoy the responsibilities on offer, such as acting as class ambassadors. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs from around the world in lessons and from each other. As a result, they understand, appreciate and respect difference.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Everyone has high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are kind and considerate. They are highly motivated and work hard in lessons. From the very start children respond to clear routines in Reception. All adults continually promote positive relationships in all aspects of school life. Incidents of unkind behaviour are rare and when they do occur, adults deal with them swiftly. Pupils are happy and rightly say they feel safe.

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

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for all pupils. They have developed a curriculum underpinned by the 'Castle Hill Values' of community, aspiration, self-worth, trust, learning and excellence that nurtures pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Subject leaders know and understand their curriculum areas. Their planning sets out what pupils should learn at each stage of their education precisely, including in the early years. Leaders ensure that staff have the necessary expertise to deliver the curriculum.

Pupils gain a great deal of knowledge and skills as they move through the school. Staff use a range of assessments to pinpoint what pupils have learned and any additional needs. This helps ensure that pupils with SEND are identified early and then supported effectively. During lessons, teachers constantly check pupils' understanding and provide support where required. However, teachers' checks are not always precise enough beyond English and mathematics. Leaders have not made sure that guidance about what to assess is linked closely to the essential learning identified in the curriculum planning. This mismatch means that teachers are not consistently checking that pupils are remembering the key knowledge they need to build on in the future.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils learn to read well through the consistent and effective approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff are well trained and have the skills they need to teach early reading successfully. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds they know. Careful assessment means that pupils at

risk of falling behind are quickly identified and helped to catch up. Pupils enjoy listening to the wide range of stories read to them by adults.

Early years leaders have established a curriculum that prepares children well for the move to Year 1 and beyond. Children's early language is prioritised well. They settle quickly into the routines of school life and high expectations of their teachers. Children love the chance to learn and explore through well-planned learning activities. However, some support staff are less knowledgeable about how young children learn than others. This means that some adult-led activities do not deepen children's understanding.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive range of opportunities that encourages children to become independent and responsible members of their community. Leaders emphasise pupils' right to learn and to be listened to. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils say everyone is welcome in their school. They are clear that everyone is treated equally and why this should be the case.

Governance is effective. Governors are highly committed and provide robust challenge, as well as considered support. Leaders use this to improve the outcomes for all pupils. They prioritise professional development for all staff. As a result, the staff feel valued. They share leaders' aspiration to provide the very best education for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in the school. They have an appropriate understanding of the risks they may face. Pupils can talk about how to stay safe, including online. They know who to talk to if they are worried.

Staff are well trained to spot the small signs that a pupil may need help. They record their observations diligently, sharing these with leaders without delay.

The designated safeguarding leads are skilled, well trained and are known by staff, pupils and their families. Systems and processes are clear, established and understood. Records are kept well. Leaders are tenacious in their expectations when working with other agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Beyond English and mathematics, the use of assessment does not always match well enough with the planned curriculum. As a result, teachers' checks do not identify precisely enough how well pupils are remembering key knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that teachers' assessments are focused on the important

building blocks of knowledge that the school has identified pupils need for future learning.

- Some early years staff do not have the same depth of understanding about young children's learning as their colleagues. This hampers their use of questioning when interacting with children and impacts on children's learning in those activities. Leaders need to ensure that all staff working in the early years have the same high-quality understanding of the early years curriculum and pedagogy.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116041
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10228562
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susan Gaines
Headteacher	Alison Story-Scrivens
Website	www.castlehillinfantschool.org/
Date of previous inspection	28 April 2008

Information about this school

- There is a breakfast club onsite which is run by an external provider and therefore was not looked at as part of this inspection.
- The school currently does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and design and technology.

- For each deep dive, 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. Inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alison Ashcroft

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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