

# Inspection of Castleton C of E Primary School

Back Street, Castleton, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S33 8WE

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

At Castleton C of E Primary every pupil is known as an individual. The 'family feel' is tangible as you walk through the door. Pupils and parents and carers value the nurturing and caring learning environment that has been established. Pupils routinely describe the school as 'amazing'. Parents agree that it is a unique and special place. One parent said: 'My child feels happy, safe, secure and valued here.' Some parents travel significant distance because they are convinced this is the best school for their child.

Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary. They are based on mutual respect and kindness. Right from the early years, staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. At every point in the school day, pupils can be spotted supporting each other. At playtime, younger pupils dress up as superheroes and act out rescuing each other as part of their games.

Staff and governors have worked with determination and pace to bring about significant school improvement. While there is more to do, the school has achieved a great deal in a short period of time. There is much to be proud of at Castleton C of E Primary School.

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

The school has put reading at the heart of the curriculum. A new phonics programme is well established. Staff have received the training they need to become reading experts. They routinely check that pupils remember new sounds. If they do not, extra help is provided so that pupils do not fall behind. Pupils are excited about reading and can talk about the books they read for pleasure. One pupil said: 'You just have to find the right book.' Younger pupils enjoy fairy tales and traditional stories. Older pupils' reading tastes become increasingly sophisticated.

The school has introduced a curriculum that is broad and ambitious, although it is at an early stage of implementation. The key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember has been identified from the early years to Year 6. In English and mathematics, the small steps of learning that pupils need to make are clear. This is not as well organised in the foundation subjects where the complexity of teaching in mixed-age classes has not been given sufficient consideration. In non-core subjects, subject leadership has not been established.

Staff subject knowledge is strong. On the whole, staff explain new learning clearly and provide activities that help pupils to acquire the intended learning. For example, in mathematics staff in the early years help children to understand the number 7 through questioning, modelling and games. In other year groups, on a few occasions, the tasks provided, and the structure of the lesson, did not help pupils to secure the knowledge they needed to stick in their long-term memory.

The school is committed to removing any barriers that may prevent pupils from learning as well as they can. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified promptly. The school seeks advice from external experts when needed. Pupils with SEND now have personalised plans that set out the support they will receive. Because of this well-considered and targeted help, they learn successfully alongside their peers.

The school has planned a personal development offer with the school's context and pupils' needs in mind. The ambition is to build pupils' resilience and support them to develop their ability to recognise and manage feelings. Pupils keep up to date with current affairs by watching programmes such as 'Newsround' and discussing the issues raised. Often the texts used in lessons also help pupils to learn about the wider world. For example, in key stage 2 pupils read 'The Windrush Child'. Pupils accept that not everyone they meet is the same as them. They recognise that everyone is unique and that this is something to be celebrated. One pupil said: 'Everyone has something about them that is amazing!' Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of settings. Even the youngest pupils know to 'block, close, tell' if they encounter something online that worries them.

Staff are supportive of the changes that have been made to improve the school. They appreciate the concern that has been given to their workload and well-being as the school has transformed. Governors are playing an increasingly active role in the strategic decisions that are made. They provide the right support and challenge and fulfil their statutory duties well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In the foundation subjects, the curriculum has not been designed with sufficient consideration for mixed-age classes. The small steps of learning that pupils need to make are not logically organised. This means that pupils' new learning does not always build on prior learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum is crafted with the school's specific context in mind.
- There is some variability in the delivery of the curriculum. Sometimes, the lesson design and the learning activities provided do not support pupils to recall prior learning or enable them to acquire new knowledge well as they could. The school should establish key expectations for lesson structure that will support pupils to learn as well as they can and retain important knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Subject leadership is at different stages of development. Leaders have prioritised the leadership of core subjects. They have not yet identified subject leaders for foundation subjects. At the moment, there is limited oversight of the

implementation and impact of the curriculum in these subjects. The school should ensure that these roles are established so that subject leaders can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

## **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 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>	112807
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10298387
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Helen Webster
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Jackson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castletonschool.co.uk">www.castletonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-controlled Church of England school in the Diocese of Derby. The school received its most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection on 10 October 2019 and was judged to be good. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- A significant number of pupils attend under a flexi-schooling basis.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher and three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to Year 1 and Year 2 pupils reading with a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector considered the school's arrangements for pupils who attend the school on a flexi-school basis and reviewed the contract the school has agreed with parents and carers of these pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text messages. An inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and during the discussions that took place.

## Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Allison

Ofsted Inspector

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