



Monday 20th March 2023

Ofsted Inspection January 31st 2023

Dear Parents,

Please find attached to this email the full Section 8 Ofsted Report from our one day inspection in January. It will also be available on our website and will be released on the Ofsted website at the beginning of next week.

The report confirms that we remain at a 'Good' rating. The inspection team however, felt that a more in-depth look at the school will be required to confirm this status is secure. Consequently, they have recommended that the next inspection is a Section Five inspection, which will be carried out over two days; this will be done within a two year period.

The actual process was extremely rigorous. I would like to thank all those who took part in the inspection, staff, Governors, parents and pupils alike.

Myself and the staff all felt very strongly that at the outset of the inspection, it was clear the team were more interested in what was not quite right, rather than what is good about our school. I do feel the good aspects have been rather downplayed in this report and am generally very disappointed in the tone and the negative nature of what has been published. The opening section titled 'What is it like to attend this school?' reads beautifully until the very last statement, a statement that seems to be quite out of context and appears to serve no particular purpose other than to add a negative spin on what has gone before. I requested that this statement be moved to the section in the report regarding the curriculum, but sadly, this request was declined.

We have three main areas to work on, and we are always happy to work towards improvement.

- Our curriculum documents are not quite written how they wanted them. We have been asked to be more specific about the knowledge we impart. Our planning documents currently published on the website <https://www.castletonschool.co.uk/curriculum-planning-documents/> will be updated accordingly by the end of the summer term.
- Our safeguarding procedures are monitored carefully by the Governing Body. It was felt that the inspectors had some unrealistic expectations of our Governors and their knowledge of what is going on at various points in the school day. However, things like staff carrying a First Aid kit when the children walk to the Castle for lunch, can easily be rectified.
- The curriculum leadership aspect is something that has already been identified on our School Improvement Plan in September 2022. We feel we were one step ahead of them with this one!





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We are saddened that so much of what makes us a unique and vibrant school was not acknowledged. The context of this was also given no recognition, our fight against closure only four years ago when we had just five pupils, is such an important part of our 'story'. We have built a healthy pupil roll, established an excellent team of highly skilled staff and created our own bespoke curriculum to fit with our offer of flexi-schooling, all in such a short space of time!

It is satisfying that elements of the report read very well. The comments on the reading were well received as this has been a key area of development for the whole school. I am sure that when Ofsted return within two years, the areas for improvement will have been addressed in full, and perhaps we will have more opportunity to showcase what we do well.

The children are at the heart of everything we do, and 'Learning Through Enjoyment' remains our goal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nancy Lees'.

Mrs N Lees
(Headteacher)

Castleton C of E Primary School
is committed to safeguarding and
promoting the welfare of children.



Derbyshire Healthy Schools
Community Award

