

Inspection of a good school: Castlefield School

The Middle Way, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP12 3LE

Inspection dates:

8 to 9 May 2024

Outcome

Castlefield School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents and pupils describe Castlefield as a 'wonderful place to learn'. Staff have created an ambitious and inclusive environment. Pupils are happy and achieve well. Children make a strong start to their school life in the Reception class. This high level of care and support continues throughout the school. Both pupils and staff live by the school's building blocks of 'learning for life', 'experience and enrichment' and 'no excuses'.

Teachers know pupils well. They have high expectations of what pupils can learn and how they need to behave. The youngest pupils settle quickly. They learn in a secure and safe environment, gaining confidence and making friends easily. Pupils enjoy their learning, behave well and work hard in lessons. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss their learning. They say this helps them to think for themselves.

Pupil leaders make an effective and positive contribution to the school community. These include roles such as play leaders and peer mentors. Peer mentors are trained so that they can help other children sort out their disagreements during play times. These opportunities develop pupils' resilience and compassion.

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

The school's curriculum ensures that teachers deliver learning in a sensible order. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their language and mathematical skills. Staff teach pupils valuable knowledge, skills and vocabulary across the curriculum. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. They take pride and care in their work. Staff model new ideas to children clearly. However, in some lessons staff do not always check as carefully as they could, whether pupils have understood the learning or not. As a result, some pupils' mistakes and misunderstandings are not identified as quickly as they could be.

Pupils learn to read well. This led to very strong outcomes for Year 1 pupils in the national phonics test in 2023. Staff teach early reading and phonics effectively. Leaders have

established thorough, efficient approaches that support all pupils to develop the knowledge that they need. Staff track how well pupils have learned the sounds taught. If any pupils need further practice, they receive support and catch up quickly. Staff promote reading for pleasure across the school and this starts in Nursery. Staff choose books to read to pupils that inspire and help to develop a love of reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Staff adapt the curriculum and are sensitive to individuals' needs. Staff work with professionals from outside the school and create highly personalised programmes where needed. There are increasing numbers of pupils with SEND who are joining the school and some pupils' needs are increasingly complex and changing over time. Leaders continue to adapt provision effectively for these pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Staff teach pupils how to behave using the school's clear rules and routines. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and pay close attention to pupils' individual needs. Pupils show high levels of respect and confidence. There are very strong, positive relationships between pupils and staff. The school has a deliberate approach to nurturing pupils' physical and mental health. For example, pupils learn the importance of living a healthy lifestyle through the physical education curriculum and this is also considered within the school lunch offer. The school's processes to encourage positive pupil behaviour are equally strong. Staff analyse and then address any patterns of poor behaviour frequently so that pupils can learn in a positive environment.

The school's clear expectations have led to strong pupil attendance. Leaders' regular checking of attendance helps identify any issues early, and the school acts to make sure that all families receive the support they need.

The school supports pupils' wider development and well-being effectively. Pupils flourish in their various roles and responsibilities such as peer mentors and play leaders. Pupils enjoy taking part in other opportunities and clubs. These include playing in the school football teams and being a role model as a prefect or school councillor.

Governors carry out a range of activities to assure themselves that the school's systems are working well. This has helped them to ensure that the quality of education continually improves. When making decisions, leaders consider the impact on staff carefully. This makes for a happy staff team whose members feel very well supported and proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, staff do not check what pupils have learned and understood carefully enough. This means that some pupils' misconceptions are not always being identified

as quickly as they could be. Leaders must ensure that staff check pupils' understanding and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively across the whole curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2015.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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

Unique reference number	110522
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10321784
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	None
Number of pupils on the school roll	475
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mel Malama-Smith
Headteacher	Andrew Kann
Website	www.castlefieldschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school.
- This school has before-school provision provided by school staff.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, he held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- The inspector held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, the other senior leaders and the teaching staff in the school. They met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector also met online with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during visits to classrooms, during breaktimes and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. They considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

Inspection team

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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