

Castle Hill Junior School

Dryden Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 6QD

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, over time, have not secured consistently good teaching. Consequently, pupils' outcomes have not improved rapidly.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are not always rigorous enough to drive improvements in teaching across the curriculum.
- A number of changes to leadership and staffing have led to inconsistency and instability. This has contributed towards slowing the impact of school improvement.
- Teachers do not use pupil assessment information well enough to plan activities that ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Not all disadvantaged pupils have their needs effectively met. As a result, they make slower progress.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that the work they set is challenging enough. As a result, most-able pupils do not make good progress.
- Despite progress improving in many areas across the school, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in national test results has been below the national average for the past two years.
- Although the progress pupils make is getting better, there is still some variance across and within year groups.
- Although the majority of parents are happy, the frequent changes in leadership and staffing have resulted in some concerns about how well the school is led and managed.
- The number of exclusions, although reducing, is higher than the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and leadership team have secured improvements in a short period of time.
- There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability established between the trust and leaders at all levels within the school.
- The school is a calm and orderly community. The new behaviour policy is having a positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils in the additional resource provision make good progress because the school has accurately identified their needs and put in place provision that supports them well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that school leaders:
 - undertake more rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, to drive its accelerated improvement
 - take greater responsibility for improving pupils' outcomes across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and the outcomes of pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they can, regardless of their starting points, including the most able pupils
 - outcomes improve for disadvantaged pupils through accurate identification of the most effective strategies to meet their needs and closer monitoring of all interventions
 - assessment information is used effectively to set tasks that build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Improve the school's provision for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - the number of exclusions resulting from a minority of pupils' challenging behaviour reduces
 - pupils' attendance continues to improve and the persistent absence of a minority of pupils continues to decrease, so that all pupils benefit from the education offered.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Changes in leadership have slowed the pace of improvement and have led to inconsistencies. Leaders have not set high enough expectations to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and, subsequently, raise the outcomes for pupils to a good standard.
- While there are improvements that are making a difference, including a new approach to managing pupils' behaviour, a number of these are still in their infancy and need more time to have a full impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Current school leaders have a realistic and accurate view of the school's areas for improvement. The new headteacher and leadership team have already made a positive impact in the time they have been leading the school. A clear educational philosophy and sharply focused development work are already having a noticeable effect on driving improvement. However, leaders' monitoring of teaching quality, in different subjects, is not always sufficiently rigorous to help teachers to improve the quality of their work rapidly.
- The system for managing teachers' performance is fit for purpose. However, the many changes in leadership and teaching staff have meant that the progress pupils make is variable across the school. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils and those in Year 6.
- Middle leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities and focused on improving outcomes. However, it is too early to measure their impact on raising standards for pupils.
- Leaders have identified some of the needs of disadvantaged pupils effectively and, in these cases, funding has been allocated appropriately. The breakfast club has been particularly successful in improving attendance and punctuality. However, the frequent changes of teaching staff have resulted in disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, not making good enough progress in a range of subjects.
- There is now a comprehensive programme of professional development for staff that focuses on the school improvement priorities and, as a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Newly qualified teachers are supported well to develop their teaching skills.
- The redesigned curriculum now includes a broad and balanced range of activities. Pupils are encouraged to be enquiring and develop their learning both inside and outside the classroom. Good links with other schools promote wide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This includes teaching pupils about fundamental British values, so that they learn to be respectful and tolerant and apply this to their day-to-day life. Additionally, pupils have regular opportunities to perform in public and participate in a range of sports. The changes to the house system gives more pupils a voice as leaders. Regular visitors, from a range of backgrounds, are welcomed to the school. Extra-curricular activities are popular, and pupils regularly attend sport, music and other after-school clubs.

- The school makes good use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium to promote physical activity. Specialist coaches work successfully throughout the school to improve teachers' coaching skills and pupils' physical development, as well as promoting greater participation in sport. More pupils now go to sports clubs and there are more opportunities for competitive events.
- The leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. The additional special educational needs funding is used efficiently and the team of staff is well led. Staff have received training to identify and meet a variety of needs, and are effectively deployed throughout the school. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The restructuring and relocation of the additional resource provision, combined with new ways of working, have improved the quality of teaching and outcomes for all pupils by accurately identifying individual needs and implementing appropriate provision.
- Overall, attendance is improving. Leaders at all levels, including the trust, have made improving attendance a priority. A range of strategies has been used to promote the link between good attendance and punctuality, and good academic outcomes.
- The majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors, or who responded to Ofsted's free-text survey and online questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school. There were a number of concerns raised about behaviour, the impact of the frequent changes of staff and about how effectively staff communicate with parents. Leaders are aware of parental views and are responding appropriately.
- Partnership working with the executive principal has provided support for the leadership of the school and has contributed effectively to overall school improvement.

Governance of the school

- The trust has assumed direct governance of the school during the periods of leadership instability. Together, the chief operating officer and the regional and local accountability review and challenge teams have been committed to moving the school forward.
- The trust has sought out and shared a range of skills and expertise to support the leadership of the school and used these effectively to monitor and evaluate improvement plans and challenge leaders over the effectiveness of their actions.
- The trust has been fully involved in overseeing recruitment and performance management arrangements and taken effective steps to improve the leadership of the school.
- The governing body has sought out and installed experienced external leaders and deployed resources effectively.
- The trust has recently installed a new local team composed of local leaders and school leaders with direct lines of responsibility and accountability.
- The trustees have a good understanding of the use of additional funds given to the school and the impact of the actions taken to improve outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils are safe and well cared for. All staff responsible for different aspects of safeguarding, including site security, are thorough in their approach to maintaining accurate systems and records.
- All staff receive regular training on the school's systems to keep pupils safe.
- Staff know and use the systems in place to monitor and report on the welfare of pupils. Leaders follow up on concerns quickly and effectively to ensure that pupils and their families receive the right support.
- Those responsible for child protection ensure that all staff are up to date with requirements and remain well informed.
- Checks on adults employed by the school and school visitors are rigorous.
- Pupils confidently spoke about the range of adults who they can turn to for support.
- Adults across the school reinforce the safe use of the internet and, as a result, pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online.
- Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school and requires improvement. Assessment information is not used consistently well enough to plan pupils' next steps in learning, to support their good progress. Teaching is not matched closely enough to meet the needs of pupils across different ranges of ability. Pupils sometimes lack opportunities to build on what they have learned over time, which means that progress is slower, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- In mathematics, standards are variable. In some year groups, pupils can apply their mathematical skills, and knowledge of number and shape, when solving problems. However, the appropriateness of challenge varies between classes and some pupils have gaps in their learning.
- Teachers do not check the learning and progress of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, closely enough. As a result, these pupils do not make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics and do not reach the highest standards they could.
- There is not enough emphasis on having a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting or an acceptable presentation of work. This leads to some pupils not demonstrating a pride in their work.
- The recent changes in the approaches to teaching mathematics and improving writing are providing more challenge and greater consistency across the school.
- The school's emphasis on reading for pleasure ensures that pupils enjoy reading. The increased focus the school has given to the teaching of phonics is resulting in improvements in the standards of reading. Pupils heard reading during the inspection read fluently, using a range of strategies. The school library is well used.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in both the main school and the additional resource provision, are making good progress from their starting points. This is because their learning needs are understood, their progress is closely tracked and effective interventions are in place.
- Additional adults are effectively deployed across the school. They are fully involved in supporting the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. They work well with teachers and are keen to develop their skills so they can make a positive difference to pupils' outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Not all pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. In a few classes, there is still some low-level disruption to learning where teaching does not match pupils' needs.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying. They say that while unkind behaviour sometimes happens, there is no homophobic bullying in school. Pupils acknowledge that the increase in adults on the playground means that issues are dealt with immediately.
- Pupils are safe in this inclusive and welcoming community. Pupils know they are listened to and parental concerns are followed up.
- The school provides subsidised care before and after school to support pupils and their families. This has led to improved attendance and punctuality, and improving outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils consider the new house system to be popular and are able to talk about improvements that have been made, including the new play zones in the playground.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online.
- Pupils are very positive about the school's work to promote healthy lifestyles and knowledgeable about how they can stay fit and healthy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A significant number of exclusions have taken place over the past two years. Leaders acknowledge that the behaviour of some pupils has been challenging. Staff and pupils welcome the new, whole-school approach to behaviour management, which focuses on improving the culture of learning and increased self-regulation. Nevertheless, the level of exclusions remains too high.
- Some parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of a small group of pupils. The school has actively sought, and is receiving, support from the trust so that pupils' individual needs are met and, therefore, their behaviour does not interfere with their own learning or with the learning of others.

- The attendance of pupils is improving. While it is below average compared with other schools nationally, the school and the trust track attendance carefully and work with families to support those pupils who attend less frequently.
- Pupils respect the school environment. The library is clean and tidy and there are attractive displays of pupils' work around the school. These include work about the Stone Age and 'living in modern Britain'.
- Pupils move calmly around the school and are punctual to their lessons. The majority listen to their teachers and are happy to respond to their questions. Pupils respect their peers when they are performing or sharing their work.
- The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, share the view that they would recommend the school. However, a small proportion of parents feel that the frequent changes in leadership and teaching staff have caused them concern about the quality of education offered to their children.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Results over the last two years indicate that the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the key stage 2 national tests was low when compared with the national average.
- Some most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have not been challenged to make better than expected progress or to deepen their knowledge and understanding. However, work in pupils' books in all year groups shows that across the curriculum many pupils are now being presented with greater challenge.
- The school's own assessment information suggests that pupils are now making stronger progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematics skills. However, the end of key stage 2 national tests for Year 6 in 2017 show that a higher proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in their writing when compared with results for mathematics or reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made inconsistent progress from their starting points because their needs have not always been effectively addressed. This is particularly the case in Year 6. The renewed emphasis on high-quality teaching and more accurate identification of effective strategies, as well as on closer monitoring of interventions, is beginning to diminish the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
- Pupils' reading skills are developing over time. Pupils are able to use phonics skills successfully to read words that are more complex. The most able pupils who read to inspectors could read expressively. They successfully describe characters and read text with fluency. However, in the past, their rate of development has been too slow. As a result, the number of pupils who reached the expected standard in the key stage 2 reading tests in 2017 was below the national average.
- The school's own assessment information, supported by work seen in pupils' books, shows that many pupils across the school are now making good progress and an increasing number are working at or above age-related expectations. This is particularly evident in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who attend the

additional resource provision make good progress from their individual starting points. During the inspection, these pupils demonstrated effective social skills and are improving their reading and writing over time.

- Closer links with local high schools and increased opportunities to experience specialist teaching are resulting in pupils being better prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	141373
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10036107

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chief operating officer	Mary McKeeman
Principal	Gemma Andrews
Telephone number	01473 741758
Website	www.castlehillprimary.org.uk
Email address	office@castlehillprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Castle Hill Junior School opened in December 2014 as a sponsor-led academy run by the Bright Tribe Trust through which it operates.
- The current permanent headteacher has been in post since June 2017. Since converting to academy status, the school has had two substantive headteachers and an interim headteacher. An executive headteacher has been supporting the school since September 2015. The deputy headteachers have been appointed since the school became an academy.
- The school is fully staffed with permanent teachers.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic heritages is well below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The school has an additional resource provision for 20 pupils.
- No pupils currently attend any alternative form of education.
- The school operates its own nurture unit.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out a range of observations in all classes, alongside senior leaders.
- Learning walks were undertaken both with leaders and with pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, newly qualified staff, members of the trust and the executive principal.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' written work, including that on display and work from last year. They heard pupils read, both in class and in settings that are more informal.
- Inspectors spoke to different groups of pupils about their work. They also spoke about their experiences of being pupils at Castle Hill Junior School.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at different times of the day. These included before and after school, and at lunchtimes.
- The breakfast club was visited. Inspectors also spoke to members of the wider team supporting families.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of written evidence, including safeguarding records, behaviour records, records of attendance and school improvement work. Records of the work of leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching and the school's records of pupils' progress were also looked at. Trust records and plans for improvement were closely considered.
- Inspectors met informally with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. They took account of 46 responses to Parent View, alongside a range of written comments submitted by parents.
- Inspectors also took into account 51 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Chaplin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Trish Hardy	Ofsted Inspector
Rachael Judd	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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