

Inspection of Castlechurch Primary School

Tennyson Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9SY

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

The headteacher of this school is Mrs Elizabeth Goodyear. This school is part of Children First Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Abigail Rourke, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nicola Chell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really enjoy coming to Castlechurch School. They value the interesting lessons and trips the school plans to help them gain first-hand experiences of the topics they are learning. Pupils are keen and confident to share their ideas but also respect and listen to others.

The school is determined to provide a broad and ambitious curriculum that helps pupils to do well. The school ensures that pupils who need extra help get the support they need. As a result, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils learn about how to keep safe, what bullying is, and what to do if it happens. The school is vigilant for any signs of bullying and is quick to act if necessary. Pupils remember what they have been taught about keeping safe and say they are safe in school.

The school community hub has an extensive and exciting range of activities and support for their families and the wider community, for example women's well-being clinics, toddler groups and baby weigh-ins. Pupils are very proud to have this resource as part of their school.

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

The school has a clear vision that focuses on raising the aspirations of its pupils and making the school a positive place to learn and work. All work hard to be an integral part of the community they serve. Parents and carers, pupils, and staff are very positive about the leadership of the school. Staff feel that leaders do all they can to support them with their workload.

There are extensive and well-thought-through systems for checking what the school does. This checking enables all leaders, including those responsible for governance, to proactively identify and secure ways to improve the school.

The school organise the topics they want pupils to learn in a logical sequence. As a result, the curriculum, including the early years foundation stage curriculum, is well planned. However, there is some variability in the delivery of the curriculum across the school. In most lessons, information is presented to pupils clearly. This helps pupils to complete activities and learn the intended curriculum well. But in some lessons, teachers do not present information clearly enough. Where this happens, some pupils do not understand what they are learning, and activities are completed incorrectly.

Reading is one of the highest priorities for the school. The phonics curriculum starts in the early years and is well planned and delivered. As a result, pupils make good progress in their phonics knowledge. Older pupils develop their reading fluency and understanding of more complex texts as they move through the school.

The school has processes to check how well pupils learn the intended curriculum. Sometimes, teachers use assessment well to check what pupils know and remember over time and identify those pupils who need more support. However, the use of assessment is inconsistent across the school, especially in the foundation subjects. This means teachers do not always have an accurate view of what pupils know and remember over time.

The school has a good understanding of the SEND of pupils. Individual SEND plans identify what the next assessment step is for these pupils. However, in some lessons, pupils do not consistently get the support they need to access their learning. Sometimes, these pupils cannot understand the task or how to use the resources to help them complete it.

Children in the early years quickly learn the routines and settle into school well. Older pupils know the school rules and try hard to follow them. A few pupils do not attend school often enough, but the school knows who these pupils are. They work well with these families to help improve their child's attendance.

The school has thought carefully about how to develop pupils beyond the academic curriculum. They know what they want them to learn so that they can make positive choices. Pupils firmly believe that accepting differences and diversity is an important part of living together. Pupils love the many opportunities they have to build their leadership skills. For example, they take on extra responsibilities in school, raise money for charities, and buy resources for their eco classroom.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are not always clear what they are learning and how to complete tasks successfully. The school should ensure that the curriculum in all subjects is implemented effectively so that pupils are secure in what they are learning.
- Teachers do not use assessment effectively in some subjects, especially foundation subjects. As a result, teachers do not have an accurate view of what gaps or errors in knowledge pupils have in some subject areas. The school should ensure that assessment is used well across all subjects to help pupils build their knowledge and understanding over time.
- The school does not consistently identify how it intends to enable pupils with SEND to access their learning. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not understand the tasks they are given and are not making the progress they could. The school should ensure that it identifies precisely how pupils will be supported

in lessons so that they can access the learning, and should ensure that all relevant staff understand and apply the chosen strategies.

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

Unique reference number	148122
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10290673
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	283
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Chell
Headteacher	Elizabeth Goodyear
Website	www.castlechurchprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Children First Learning Partnership in December 2020.
- The school has a before- and after-school club operating on the site. This provision is managed by the school.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.

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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with representatives from the multi-academy trust, the local academy board, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the leader of SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed documents on the school’s website and additional documents provided by leaders during the inspection.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- The inspectors observed pupils at other times of the day to evaluate their behaviour.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Amanda Green, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel King	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Vrahimi	His Majesty’s Inspector

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