

Castle Hill Infant School

Address: Greenbank, Winklebury Way, Castle Hill Infant School, BASINGSTOKE, Hampshire, RG23 8BN

Unique reference number (URN): 116041

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school places inclusion at the heart of everything it does. Leaders and staff ensure that every child is supported to thrive, whatever their starting point or background. They have aspirational expectations for all pupils.

High expectations underpin the school's approach. Targeted and well-matched support reduces pupils' barriers to learning effectively. Early identification of communication needs in the early years, for example, strengthens children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. Leaders work closely with external partners to enhance the school's inclusion offer and secure additional support for pupils and their families. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who require more specialised approaches receive prompt, tailored support that enables them to access learning successfully. When needed, the school makes effective use of alternative provision.

Staff are determined that every child can and will succeed. Systems for identifying pupils who may need extra support are well understood and used consistently by staff. This results in pupils' needs being recognised and supported as early as possible.

Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Their decisions are informed by educational research. This approach has a highly positive impact on pupils' outcomes from their starting points.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They develop into fluent, enthusiastic readers, and most read with confidence and enjoyment. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support that they need to achieve well.

Although pupils write well in English, their written work across some areas of the curriculum is not as high quality as it could be. Leaders have improved the curriculum to give pupils more meaningful opportunities to develop their writing in other subjects. However, this work is in the early stages of implementation.

Across the curriculum, pupils learn the intended knowledge well, including those who face barriers to learning. They speak with enthusiasm about significant historical events, such as the Great Fire of London and the Titanic disaster, demonstrating secure understanding and growing curiosity about the world.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive each day happy and ready to learn. They feel part of a caring community. Attendance remains above national averages, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged. Persistent absence has remained low over time. Leaders promote the importance of high attendance clearly and consistently. They monitor attendance closely, act quickly when concerns arise and work sensitively with parents to remove barriers. Pupils arrive on time. Staff address absences promptly. As a result, pupils attend regularly.

Behaviour across the school is calm, respectful and orderly. Pupils move sensibly around the site, and low-level disruption is rare. Staff apply expectations consistently, and warm relationships support pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Bullying or discriminatory behaviour is rare, and leaders act swiftly and effectively when concerns arise. Pupils are polite, kind and motivated. Typically, they take pride in their work and show courtesy to visitors. Pupils understand the rules and aspire to meet them, knowing that staff will help if difficulties occur. Teachers provide well-judged support when pupils struggle, ensuring that behaviour improves. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have designed a curriculum that places pupils' needs firmly at its centre. It is broad, balanced and ambitious for all. Leaders have an astute understanding of curriculum quality and teaching. They know where this is working well and where further refinements are needed. Since the previous inspection, they have identified the essential knowledge pupils must learn in every subject and sequenced it so that learning builds coherently over time. Starting from the beginning of the early years, there is a focus on pupils developing important knowledge in language, reading, writing and mathematics.

Typically, teaching delivers the curriculum well. Staff check pupils' learning at the end of each unit and use this information to strengthen pupils' foundational skills. Actions to improve handwriting, spelling and mathematical fluency are having a positive impact. However, at times, there are inconsistencies in teaching across the curriculum. Leaders recognise this and continue to raise expectations to secure greater consistency.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are a clear focus in lessons. Staff use pupils' support plans effectively and provide well-matched opportunities that help them learn successfully. Adaptations are thoughtful and purposeful, helping pupils with SEND to access the curriculum confidently and make progress.

Early years

Expected standard 

Staff provide nurturing, carefully considered education in the early years, ensuring children make a positive and happy start to school life. They know children well and hold high expectations for every child. From the outset, staff focus sharply on developing children's language. They model rich vocabulary and immerse children in stories, songs and rhymes, helping them become increasingly articulate. Children build secure phonics knowledge and develop important early reading and mathematical skills. Staff strengthen early writing by

prioritising physical development and correct pencil grip. Children are typically well prepared for Year 1.

The early years curriculum is ambitious and thoughtfully planned. Teachers use their checks effectively to adapt activities so that all children make progress. Staff model language clearly and encourage children to use talk partners, which builds vocabulary, communication and social skills. The curriculum provides regular opportunities for children to practise and apply what they have learned, helping them deepen their understanding. On occasion, staff do not support children to maintain their focus and extend their learning as they play both indoors and outdoors.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school and the community they serve extremely well. They are passionate about infant education and understand the importance of laying secure foundations so that all pupils can progress confidently into junior school. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. They are sustaining improvements and the continued success of the school by developing leadership further.

Governors are highly committed. Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties well, for example by overseeing safeguarding systems. They maintain a clear strategic vision and provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Their wide range of expertise strengthens the school's leadership and contributes to ongoing improvement.

Staff feel valued and play an active role in shaping the school's direction. Professional development is purposeful, evidence informed and closely aligned to school priorities. Leaders promote a positive culture that prioritises staff wellbeing and carefully considers workload.

Leaders act decisively in the best interests of pupils. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those facing additional barriers receive timely, effective support. Leaders see their close working relationships with parents and carers as very important in ensuring that pupils thrive. They proactively communicate the school's work and rationale. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing effectively. They have a clear strategic vision rooted in the school's core values of community, appreciation, self-esteem, truth, learning and excellence. These values, represented through the school's 'Dragons', are embedded across the curriculum. Pupils develop resilience, independence and pride in themselves. They learn to respect others, including those from different cultures and backgrounds, and understand the importance of kindness and fairness. Assemblies and class discussions reinforce these messages, and pupils talk confidently about what is right and wrong.

The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well structured and age-appropriate. Pupils learn how to live healthy lives, eat well, exercise regularly and get enough sleep. Leaders enhance this through weekly swimming for Year 2 pupils in the summer term, helping them develop confidence in the water and understand how to stay safe. Pupils are taught to build healthy relationships and recognise online and offline risks. They explain clearly how to keep themselves safe online and in their community. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is a key element of the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to voice their views and ideas through discussions on a range of topics.

Leaders broaden pupils' horizons through well-planned trips and enrichment activities linked to the curriculum. Visits to farms, museums and gardens deepen pupils' understanding of the world and support their academic and personal growth. Leaders ensure all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can take part by providing financial and practical support. They track participation carefully to ensure that everyone has a chance to take part.

Pupils value the wide range of clubs on offer, including cooking, choir, multi-sports, art, board games and recorders. Pupils participate with enthusiasm. These opportunities nurture their interests and talents and help them develop confidence and teamwork. Pupils access the school's effective pastoral support. They learn to manage their feelings, resolve disagreements and seek help when needed. As a result, pupils feel safe, included and well supported to thrive.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils arrive each morning and are greeted warmly by caring staff. From the early years, staff create a reassuring start to the day. Pupils of all ages thrive in the school's nurturing atmosphere. They benefit from effective support for their social and emotional development. Leaders have high ambition for pupils. They aspire to the school's motto of 'everyday a successful day whatever it takes' to provide a supportive and kind place to learn.

Most pupils achieve well and are ready for their next stage of education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have timely support to help them close gaps in their learning. Pupils develop resilience and good character because leaders promote positive mental health. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that are matched carefully to their learning.

Pupils build positive and respectful relationships with staff, visitors and each other. They behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe because adults respond quickly and sensitively to any concerns. Bullying is rare, and pupils trust staff to resolve issues fairly. They feel listened to and valued. This strengthens their sense of belonging. Pupils enjoy school life and attend regularly because they are eager to learn and take part in the opportunities offered.

Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils develop a secure understanding of equality, respect and tolerance. These experiences prepare them well for life beyond school. Pupils take pride in leadership roles such as being school council and eco council members.

Pupils' horizons are broadened through taking part in a range of activities, such as sporting and musical events. Leaders ensure that these opportunities are open to all pupils.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure all staff apply the school's agreed teaching approaches consistently, maintaining high expectations for the quality of work in pupils' books across all subject areas.
 - Leaders should further support staff to strengthen the quality of their interactions with children in the early years to consistently build on children's knowledge and extend their vocabulary and learning.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Katie Fatania.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders. They also met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.

Inspectors spoke with pupils, staff, parents and carers. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of one alternative provision.

Headteacher: Emma Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector:

Jody Murphy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Andrew Foster, Ofsted Inspector

Nic Browne, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

181

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

180

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

14.92%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.42%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

11.60%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	3.8%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.2%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.6%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	4.0%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.9%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	15.6%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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