

Inspection of Castle Mead School

Mascroft Road, Hilperton, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 6GD

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Castle Mead is an inclusive school. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and respectful. Pupils and staff are proud of their school. They believe in the importance of equality. Pupils value opportunities to learn about the beliefs and cultures of others. They take an interest in learning about faiths that are different to their own.

At breaktimes, pupils play well together. They particularly enjoy the opportunities they have for both play and reflection outside. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that if it does occur an adult will sort it out. Pupils enjoy attending this school. The environment is calm. Pupils follow the rules of 'walking feet, voices off' when moving between classrooms.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their roles and responsibilities. For example, they enjoy being playground leaders and members of the 'Children's Parliament'. Many pupils attend clubs and enjoy activities to develop their interests. Pupils are enthusiastic about sports clubs, choir and gardening club. Parents say their children are happy and safe.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious. They have considered carefully what knowledge they want pupils to learn and by when. They have woven important concepts throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils are taught how to interpret data in both science and mathematics. This means pupils build on knowledge they already have and learn to apply it in different contexts. Staff value the opportunities that leaders provide to develop their expertise and share good practice. Teachers assess pupils' learning in a variety of ways and use this to adapt their planning. Therefore, the improvements that leaders have made to the quality of education for current pupils is not reflected in the school's published outcomes.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils read a wide variety of books and enjoy opportunities to read inside and outside of school. They talk with excitement about voting for their favourites. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children start at the school. Children's reading books match the sounds they are learning. This helps them to become fluent readers. Leaders identify pupils who need extra support with reading. Overall, this is successful, particularly for those pupils who attend the specialist resource base. However, at times, staff do not address pupils' misunderstandings when they occur. When this happens, pupils' reading is not as secure.

Many children arrive at Nursery with limited communication skills. Staff support them to develop speaking and listening skills successfully. Children then use this firm foundation in the early years foundation stage to share books and join in with songs and rhymes with enthusiasm.

Staff know the pupils within this school well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and learn successfully. Parents agree with this. Teachers consider the talents and interests of pupils with SEND and plan the curriculum to develop these.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal development. Rich extra-curricular opportunities and visits are at the heart of this curriculum. Pupils are articulate about citizenship. For example, they valued participating in local decision-making about the town's redevelopment. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum equips pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Leaders track attendance with tenacity. As a result, pupils attend regularly. Trustees and academy advisors understand their roles and meet their statutory obligations. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being and workload. They appreciate this support and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is effective. Safeguarding leaders have appropriate training. The procedures for recruiting staff, including vetting checks, are rigorous. Leaders from the multi-academy trust check the accuracy of safeguarding records.

Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and welfare. School staff receive clear training. They are confident to use the school's system for reporting concerns. The school works closely with external agencies. It secures appropriate support for pupils and their families. Pupils throughout the school know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, they know not to make friends with strangers online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teaching does not always identify pupils' misconceptions as they arise. This is especially the case for some pupils in the early stages of learning to read. This means that misconceptions persist and can hinder pupils' future learning. Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise they need to check pupils' understanding of the curriculum and swiftly remedy any misunderstandings.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	140223
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10256668
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ann Millin
Headteacher	Emma Larkham
Website	www.castlemead.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- Castle Mead school includes a specially resourced provision for pupils with complex needs, including global delay, Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy, autistic spectrum disorders and speech, language and communication disorders.
- The school includes an on-site nursery which caters for two-, three- and four-year-olds.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school is part of the Mead Academy Trust, which comprises of four primary schools.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and trust representatives, including the chair of the trust, and academy advisors. The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, 'Parent View'. She also took into consideration the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lorna Buchanan	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Greenwood	Ofsted Inspector
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