

Castleton Primary School

Address: Hillcrest Road, Castleton, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 2QD

Unique reference number (URN): 105765

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.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Published data shows that by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has improved over time. It is now close to the national average. Leaders ensure that pupils who join the school at different times of the year and from different countries are supported to address gaps in their learning. This helps them to keep up with their peers.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, generally progress well through the curriculum. Typically, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are prepared for their next stage of education.

On the whole, pupils secure the most important knowledge and skills they need to support their future learning. Pupils in key stage 1 develop their skills in handwriting and spelling, but sometimes they do not apply this well enough in their written work. Pupils recall their prior learning well in subjects such as history, art and design, and science. At times, their workbooks are not representative of this and do not support pupils in applying what they have learned in lessons.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise pupils' regular attendance at school. Attendance is viewed as everyone's responsibility within school. Leaders have developed systems to help them to check and review absence information carefully. This enables leaders to understand and address barriers that lead to pupils not attending school. Leaders and staff use this information skilfully to work with parents and carers and other agencies to support pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, attendance and punctuality are improving over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing. The attendance rates for some pupils has improved considerably. Even so, the rates of persistent absence remain above the national average.

Pupils are taught to treat others with care and respect. This contributes to a harmonious community, where pupils show positive attitudes to learning. For example, school council members describe themselves as being 'happy, helpful and hardworking'. Most pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. When this is not the case, leaders deal with incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils who sometimes find it challenging to regulate their emotions and behaviour are supported sensitively by skilled staff. Pupils benefit from learning strategies to stay calm and re-focus. These are used sensibly and independently by pupils. It helps them to become ready to learn.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. The curriculum has been reviewed to prioritise pupils' core knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing. Leaders have introduced a new writing curriculum to help staff design learning more precisely to match pupils' needs. As a result, pupils have more opportunities

to write at length. When gaps in pupils' knowledge arise, staff generally address these quickly through focused teaching and catch-up sessions.

Leaders' work to overcome pupils' barriers to learning is effective. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' use of ambitious vocabulary. This begins in the early years and builds across the school. High-quality texts are carefully selected to support this work and help develop pupils' love of language. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have speech and language needs. These pupils receive specialist support, which builds their confidence. Staff use the information that they hold about pupils' needs to adapt their teaching. As a result, most pupils access the curriculum successfully.

Staff design learning that builds on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders have established a successful approach to teaching. However, a few staff members do not consistently apply this agreed approach when teaching the full curriculum. In some year groups, this limits how well pupils progress through the curriculum and their readiness for the next stage of learning.

Early years

Expected standard 

Children in the early years benefit from a carefully considered curriculum that provides them with the foundations they need to support their learning. At the heart of this curriculum is the development of children's language and vocabulary. Staff design learning experiences to support this effectively. During the inspection, children showed great enthusiasm when finding out about minibeasts in the outdoor environment. Others observed the pond carefully, looking for frogs and talking with their friends about what they could see.

Staff develop positive relationships with children. Through this, children quickly learn to express their needs and wishes. They respond well to the well-established routines that staff have implemented. Leaders provide opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their child's education, such as through stay-and-play sessions.

Staff ensure that the teaching of reading is a priority. They teach phonics daily. Children learn their sounds securely from the start of early years. They use this knowledge to read simple words. Most begin writing with confidence. However, some children do not fully develop the writing skills they need for key stage 1. This is particularly the case when forming letters and writing with increasing control. Children who need further help, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported appropriately.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Pupils, regardless of their barriers, needs or backgrounds, are welcomed at this school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils who are new to the country. Including everyone in the school community lies at the heart of leaders' work.

The inclusion team quickly identifies pupils' needs. Support and necessary adaptations are swiftly put into place to reduce pupils' barriers to learning and wellbeing. Leaders routinely check the impact of these support strategies. They make changes when required to ensure that pupils progress through the curriculum. High-quality training improves staff's expertise,

particularly in supporting pupils' communication and language development.

The school serves a diverse community. Leaders work well with a range of professionals and agencies, including the virtual school, to seek specialist advice. They use this advice to refine their support for vulnerable pupils. Additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used effectively. Staff provide tailored support for pupils with EAL and disadvantaged pupils. This helps pupils to thrive.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders make decisions with pupils' best interests at heart. They recognise that the school's population and community are changing and have responded to meet these needs. Making every family and pupil feel welcome, particularly those who face barriers to learning and wellbeing, is central to the school's work. Alongside governors, leaders are successful in giving pupils the very best start to their education journey.

In recent years, leaders have prioritised the development of the curriculum from the early years to Year 6. They have used high-quality professional development to improve teaching. As a result of this, the teaching of mathematics and writing has improved. This is evident in pupils' achievement in these areas.

Staff are united in their pride in the school. They feel supported by leaders, including governors, who take steps to reduce workload pressures and support wellbeing.

Governors are deeply committed to the school and its community. They understand their responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties well. Governors ensure that they have a broad skill set to support and challenge leaders effectively. They have strengthened how they assure themselves of the impact of the school's work. This enables them to check that the curriculum and additional funding, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, is used appropriately. Leaders prioritise establishing positive relationships with parents and carers. Leaders and staff know families well. This partnership helps pupils to thrive.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The personal development offer is a founding pillar of this school, on which everything else is built. Leaders prioritise preparing pupils for life in a rapidly changing society. The curriculum fosters a sense of responsibility. As a result, pupils confidently describe themselves as 'rights holders'. Similarly, the school council describes its mission as working together to improve the school and the wider world. Pupils welcome and celebrate differences within their community. They learn that people have different beliefs, backgrounds and families. Leaders ensure that books reflect the diversity of the school. As a result, pupils speak confidently about the importance of treating everyone equally and with respect.

The personal, social, health and economic education programme prepares pupils well for the future, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. From the early years to Year 6, children and pupils develop positive attitudes to healthy living and eating. They learn about relationships and how to stay safe in the community and online. Pupils are supported to look after their mental health. The 'Butterfly Room' is an oasis of calm where

pupils regulate their emotions. Skilled pastoral staff support pupils effectively. This helps pupils, particularly those with barriers to their wellbeing, develop a sense of belonging.

Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values through meaningful opportunities. For example, the school council enables pupils to experience democracy in action. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils benefit from a range of trips, visits and clubs. Leaders reduce barriers to participation in activities outside the classroom and track engagement carefully. At times, opportunities that take place beyond the local area are not fully established. Consequently, pupils' experiences and aspirations are not extended as widely as they could be.

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

Pupils know that they belong and are welcome at Castleton. Relationships between pupils, staff, parents and carers are positive. Pupils benefit from the school's values of kindness, courage and curiosity. These values help pupils feel well cared for and safe. Staff know pupils as individuals. They understand their needs, interests and aspirations. Barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing are carefully reduced. This is especially the case for pupils who are new to the country and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils take great pride in their achievements. They are especially delighted when staff celebrate their hard work and contact their parents through the Friday phone call. Pupils beam with pride when this happens. This motivates them to be the best they can be. Across the curriculum, most pupils achieve well. They are generally well prepared for the next stage of education.

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of behaviour. They behave appropriately and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. The school's sharp focus on the rights of each individual helps pupils understand right and wrong. As a result, bullying is rare. Pupils know they have the right to speak up and share their views. Staff deal with any issues quickly. Pupils are keen to attend school and most do so regularly. When attendance rates dip, particularly for pupils who are persistently absent, staff work with families to reduce the barriers that lead to absence.

Pupils contribute positively to their school community. For example, the eco-monitors run an 'eco-shop' to reduce plastic use, while attendance champions review class attendance and share the number of days of learning lost with their peers. Pupils benefit from a range of visits and experiences. They enjoy learning in the school's forest area, and they work with local councillors on issues such as traffic congestion. This helps pupils understand the wider world beyond the school gates and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should embed the approach to attendance and punctuality so that pupils' attendance continues to rise and persistent absence reduces.

- Leaders should ensure that pupils secure their knowledge across the curriculum and have opportunities to apply and embed this learning in lessons so that they can achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff within the early years continue to secure children's foundational knowledge, especially in early writing, to further prepare them for the demands of the key stage 1 curriculum.
-

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors is Victoria Fee.

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.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also took account of the views of pupils, parents and carers.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher : Lindsay Torrance

Lead inspector:

Elliot Costas-Walker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Elizabeth Travis, Ofsted Inspector

Cath Cooke, 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

335

Close to 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

350

Close to 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)

33.00%

Close to 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

5.07%

Above 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

12.24%

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

Above 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).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	45%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	52%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	31%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	74%	Below
2024/25 (final)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	72%	Below
2024/25 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	31%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	84%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	64%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	67%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	37%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	45%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	22%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	80%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	69%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38%	60%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	42%	59%	Below
2024/25 (final)	60%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	22%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	70%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	37%	68%	-31 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	69%	-9 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	22%	66%	-44 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	56%	80%	-23 pp
2024/25 (final)	80%	81%	-1 pp
2023/24 (final)	69%	80%	-11 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	78%	-41 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	42%	78%	-35 pp
2024/25 (final)	60%	78%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	22%	77%	-56 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	70%	81%	-11 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	66%	79%	-14 pp

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)	5.9%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.5%	5.9%	Above

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)	18.0%	13.0%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	24.5%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	25.4%	16.2%	Above

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
© Crown copyright 2026



© Crown copyright