



Castlewood School

Self Evaluation 2021-2022

Reviewed 20/09/2021

Vision

At Castlewood School we aim to nurture pupils by building trusting relationships, enabling pupils to feel valued, to develop self-worth, raising self-esteem and supporting them to engage with learning, leading to achievement whilst experiencing success.

Our main focus rests on supporting all pupils, regardless of their starting points to reach their academic, emotional and social potential – we want pupils to be the best they can be, so they are equipped to move on and become a successful member of society.

Introduction: School Context and Key Features

The school went through academy conversion in December 2014 joining the Northern House School Academy Trust under the name 'Northern House School Solihull' changing from Secondary provision to an all through School. In September 2020 the school joined a new trust and is now sponsored by Manor Hall Academy Trust under the name 'Castlewood School'.

Castlewood is a through school from Year 1 to Year 11, with 96 places; pupils are grouped according to Year groups with a preferred maximum class size of eight pupils with two staff – a teacher and a teaching assistant.

All pupils have an EHCP in place prior to joining us, the majority are placed by Solihull, with a number from Birmingham and a few from other authorities.

Before attending our school, the majority of our pupils have been unsuccessful in a conventional mainstream setting, many have missed substantial amounts of time in full time education, often resulting in attainment below the national expectations and significant self-esteem and confidence issues.

We are a small school where all pupils and their families are well known and understood by our experienced staff and we are proud of our pastoral care which ensures our pupils are well supported.

Current rates of progress, particularly in terms of social development, have been slower than normal due to Covid restrictions – reducing opportunities for mixing with others and taking part in out of classroom experiences, particularly offsite activities.

On conversion to Manor Hall Academy Trust, the existing Governing Body became a Local Advisory Board. The long serving Chair of Governors resigned in July 2021 and the school appointed a new Chair (Paul Jackson) on 21st January 2022.

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Key development areas identified through previous SLT review and self-evaluation

Embedding the performance management cycle, implementation of MHAT Effective teacher programme and ongoing directed CPD provides the foundation for improvement of teaching and learning across the school.

Complete the redevelopment of our curriculum to reflect our vision, including the sequencing of subjects across the whole school to give our pupils the best educational experience possible.

RPI's and Exclusions are reduced by greater understanding of staff about the behaviours of pupils and ensuring high expectations are sustained in order to improve overall behaviour.

Ensure a re-distribution of some responsibilities within our UPS staff empowering them and reducing the workload across SLT in order to allow them to focus more on strategic functions within the school rather than operational.

Identify and deal with issues relating to the impact of COVID-19 on pupils and staff.



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Key Development Areas from Previous Inspections

27–28 November 2019: Section 5 Inspection

Grading:

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement

What does the school need to do to improve? **Green=Achieved** **Amber=Work in progress**

- Leaders should improve the curriculum by:
 - setting out in more detail what pupils should learn in each subject.
 - ensuring that assessment is tailored to content rather than the other way around.
 - identifying and filling gaps in pupils' basic skills and knowledge as early as possible.
 - organising all lessons so that they build up pupils' knowledge more systematically.
- Leaders should: ensure that staff are more even in the way they manage the behaviour of pupils.
- The arrival of pupils from a recently closed pupil referral unit, and the intake of new staff, has meant that senior leaders have been occupied by a spate of behaviour issues. Alongside uncertainty about the trust, this has led to delay in making strategic improvements to the curriculum and slowed the implementation of wider plans to improve the school. Leaders and the trust should: ensure that there is enough capacity among leaders to tackle this issue so that the school continues to move further forward.

24 March 2021: Additional, remote monitoring inspection

Grading: (Note the usual grading system was suspended due to this being a remote inspection)

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- review and develop curriculum planning so that it builds successfully on pupils' prior knowledge.
- ensure that clear plans are developed to check on the impact of the revised curriculum on pupils' achievement.
- ensure that phonics sessions are targeted specifically to those key stage 3 pupils who need them.

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Key Development Areas from Previous Inspections:

07 July 2021: Requires Improvement monitoring inspection visit

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- refine the processes that leaders use for self-evaluation so that they can accurately identify current strengths and weaknesses, and then plan more precisely for improvement.



The Quality of Education

SLT Judgement Grade: Requires Improvement

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum across the whole school.

In KS1 and KS2 pupils are taught using a topic based curriculum using 'Cornerstones' alongside the core subjects of Reading, Writing and Maths.

In KS3 pupils are taught individual subjects, where appropriate following the National Curriculum.

In KS4 pupils are offered GCSE qualifications in English, Mathematics, Science, Art, History, Design Technology; equivalent to GCSE qualifications are available in ICT and Physical Education; some pupils achieve vocational qualifications in Mechanics, Motorbike Maintenance and Life Skills.

Lower School teachers have responsibilities for particular subject areas and meet regularly with the Upper School specialist subject teachers to review the delivery of the curriculum across the whole school. This ensures that prior knowledge is reviewed and built upon as pupils move up through the school.

All teachers have contributed to our Curriculum vision and plan, which is regularly reviewed, developing a clear understanding of what we wish to achieve for our pupils.

Staff use an agreed marking policy that includes giving immediate verbal feedback to our pupils, to ensure the progress they make within each lesson is sustained.

SLT carry out learning walks, lesson observations and book trawls which provide valuable feedback to staff on how they may improve their practice.

The assistant head teachers i/c Lower/Upper School meet with teachers for 1:1 reflection on the reporting of and progress that pupils are making.

We have identified that COVID restrictions have in the past 18 months reduced the amount of opportunities for innovative out of the classroom experiences to take place that enhance and embed the everyday learning that takes place. Therefore, this year:

- Lower school teachers are expected to provide their classes with an educationally based visit in order to support the learning taking place at least once per half term.
- Upper school teachers are expected to provide all classes with one educational trip in the academic year.

Our Year 11 cohorts are able to access relevant college courses when they leave our school.

We currently recognise that not all subjects are delivered to our high expectations so we cannot grade this area as 'Good'.

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Behaviour and Attitudes

SLT Judgement Grade: Requires Improvement

Staff work exceptionally hard to foster outstanding working relationships with our pupils and their families. This creates trust between all parties and produces a nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe. All staff understand the importance of providing positive role models at all times.

Our attendance figures show that the majority of our pupils wish to be in school; they want to learn. This is very positive as many experienced prolonged periods of non-engagement in education prior to joining our school.

Our exclusion levels have been higher during the past 18 months than previously – this is in part due to us needing to protect the safety of our pupils and staff during the pandemic.

Low level disruption is challenged, pupils understand the expectations of them as staff support them appropriately to develop their behaviour for learning.

Trends within our monitoring system 'Behaviour Sleuth' show reductions in negative incidents over time due to staff working hard to improve pupil behaviour and attitudes.

All staff are trained in Team Teach de-escalation techniques which are used consistently to defuse potentially difficult situations.

Reflective conversations using Restorative Practice and Emotion Coaching techniques help influence positive change in behaviour.

A positive learning atmosphere is ensured by daily whole staff morning briefings and end of day de-briefs which result in excellent communication within the staff team and allows all issues to be effectively resolved.

SLT believe that there is the need for consistency of these processes to be embedded across parts of the school, so we cannot yet grade this area as 'Good'.



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Personal Development

SLT Judgement Grade: Good

Pupils trust our staff due to the extremely strong relationships the adults are able to build and maintain with them.

All staff are skilled in listening and supporting our pupils through the range of personal issues that they face, which in turn allows the pupils to then engage in learning.

Form tutors check in with their groups twice a day during registration, checking how pupils are managing emotionally with the day's challenges.

All staff contact parents/carers regularly as appropriate to the situation; pupils and their families know that our support is available to them.

Our reward system of four points earned per session within the school – whether in a lesson or at social time (break/lunch) is fully embedded into the ethos of our school. Pupils respond well to this system, wishing to find themselves in 'Gold' at the end of the week which qualifies them to take part in extra-curricular activities, many off-site. Those in 'Bronze' reflect with staff as to why they were unable to achieve higher in that week, prior to then joining on-site activities on the Friday afternoon.

Those pupils that require more support by external professionals are fully supported by our DSL's who constantly update all staff so they too can give appropriate advice and understand each young person's situation.

Our Pastoral Team provide continuous support to those pupils that have temporary struggles with their learning; helping them to recognise their issues, address them and then re-engage with learning.

Families recognise the efforts our staff go to, in order to support our pupils; including personal calls; home visits; lifts home. This underpins our ethos of having excellent home school relationships.

Throughout the pandemic we have maintained an offer of face to face education which has reduced the emotional impact on our vulnerable learners.

Out of classroom experiences such as Commando Joe's, Forest Schools, Greenpower, Rightrax, sports fixtures and events, swimming, school allotment provide a backbone to our nurturing and supportive environment.

Residential trips are a fundamental part of our offer and give our vulnerable pupils life-long memorable experience, often of them successfully over-coming a fear. These trips improve their self-esteem and resilience whilst strengthening working relationships.

The families of Year 6 pupils wish their children to remain in our school, whilst our Year 11 families often remark that they would have liked us to offer a 6th Form option.

Pastoral care has been a strength of our school for many years and underpins our vision and ethos.

We feel post-16 aspirations and achievements need to be improved so we cannot yet grade this area as 'Outstanding'.

Building Confidence and Self-belief



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Leadership and Management

SLT Judgement Grade: Good

All staff are working with our pupils to develop their self-confidence, self-belief and independence, through high expectations, shared values, policies and practice.

We adjusted our SLT in September 2020 by appointing an Assistant Head i/c Upper School, which has in turn allowed both the Deputy Head and the Head Teacher to focus on strategic developments within the school, rather than managing the daily issues that inevitably arise.

The size of our school and subsequent staffing levels has resulted in us utilising our UPS teachers by ensuring they have responsibilities that support the whole school. This is in place of what other establishments would call 'middle managers'.

Staff recognise that SLT are supportive and accessible to them. Daily morning briefings and end of day de-briefs provide regular communication channels for all aspects of the school; SLT also have an open-door policy that staff respect and use appropriately.

Regular training is offered throughout the year.

Staff development is discussed and supported where it will benefit the overall direction that the school wishes to progress in.

SLT meet regularly to review the day to day management of situations and to ensure the strategic overview is maintained and developed.

The Local Advisory Board (Governors) requires a new Chair and further members to improve its impact on the development of the school.

The effective teacher programme is providing the framework for reflective practice which in turn produces improvements in teaching via peer support.

Safeguarding is effective, with all staff receiving regular updates. Outside agencies work closely with us to ensure relevant support is provided for our pupils and their families.

In order to become 'Outstanding' we feel all areas of the school need to be 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Castlewood School SLT Overall Effectiveness Judgement Grades:

Overall effectiveness	Requires Improvement
The quality of education	Requires Improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires Improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good