

John Clifford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122539
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	359268
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anita Hughes
Headteacher	Simon Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 teachers in 18 different lessons. They spoke with parents, governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked in detail at safeguarding documentation, attendance records, evidence of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, and questionnaires from pupils, staff and 122 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Why is pupils' attainment no higher than at the last inspection?
- How effective are leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school?
- How effectively does the governing body offer challenge to shape the strategic direction of the school?

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. An unusually high number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting points, the majority of these from Key Stage 2 classes. More than three quarters of the teachers have joined the school in the last three years.

The school holds Healthy Schools Gold status, Eco-Schools status and the government's School Achievement Award.

An after-school and holiday club, managed by an outside agency, operates on the school site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Teaching is of high quality, and the raising of pupils' self-esteem and the celebration of the value of each individual are at the heart of all the school does. Pupils achieve well and demonstrate good personal development, for example through their good behaviour.

Pupils' attainment has been variable across subjects in recent years but is broadly in line with national averages. Literacy has been a focus for improvement and, as a result, attainment in English is higher than in mathematics. High ability pupils, in particular, do better in English than in mathematics. The way in which teachers use feedback to pupils to promote learning has also improved, although its impact has not been as great in mathematics as in other subjects.

Inspectors found pupils' progress to be good in lessons, sometimes exceptionally so, and the work in their books also points to good progress over time, regardless of their starting points. Because large numbers join or leave the school other than at the usual joining or leaving times, particularly in Key Stage 2, measuring the progress of a whole cohort of pupils can give a misleading picture: those tested at the end are not the same individuals as those tested at the beginning. Pupils' progress is actually better than test results alone suggest.

The school works exceptionally hard to raise attendance levels. It uses competitions, incentives and rewards, as well as sanctions which include court action. There remain, however, a few persistent absentees who greatly affect the overall attendance rates.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The school itself is a diverse, but very harmonious community. Pupils take up many opportunities to exercise responsibilities within the school, and engage well with the local community as well as with partner schools in other parts of Britain and overseas. They are well prepared to take their place as global citizens.

The headteacher, newly appointed at the time of the last inspection, has assembled a highly motivated and ambitious team of teachers. Self-evaluation is good: leaders monitor and evaluate performance carefully, and address areas of weakness well. The governing body also has good first-hand knowledge of the school and offers challenge to help shape its strategic direction. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by
 - ensuring that high ability pupils are as rigorously challenged in this subject as they are in English

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- ensuring that the quality of feedback given to pupils about their work in mathematics matches that found in other subjects.
- Improve attendance by
 - identifying patterns of absenteeism more rigorously
 - ensuring that support for persistent absentees is more closely targeted at the specific needs of individuals and their families.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils join the school with standards which are below national expectations for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is broadly in line with national averages. Attainment is affected by the standards of pupils who arrive at the school during the latter part of Key Stage 2, so may vary significantly from year to year, even when progress is good. Attainment is higher in English than in mathematics although both are broadly in line with national averages. In lessons, and over time, boys, girls, pupils from minority ethnic groups and/or who speak English as an additional language, all make progress as well as each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted support and they also progress well.

Pupils were keen to tell inspectors how much they enjoy school. They show high levels of interest in lessons, and are willing to volunteer answers and listen to each other. They usually work at a good pace, but occasionally pace of learning drops for higher ability pupils, when their mathematics tasks are too easy. Pupils explain clearly why they feel safe in school. They feel that bullying is fairly rare and that teachers deal with it effectively if it does occur. They are well informed about internet safety and cyber bullying. The school strongly emphasises routines and procedures to promote good behaviour. This means that newcomers to the school quickly understand what is expected.

Pupils explain eagerly how they stay healthy, and talk about the benefits of exercise and a healthy diet, and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. They take up opportunities to make a contribution to the school, serving, for example, as behaviour detectives, play leaders, or eco committee members. The school council has had some influence in bringing about change. Some pupils are also involved in the local community, for example in charity work and local sports and arts festivals.

Because pupils' attendance and their attainment in basic literacy and numeracy are average, their preparation for their economic well-being is also satisfactory. However, they are regular and confident users of information and communication technology (ICT), and they work well in pairs or teams, which stands them in good stead for future success.

Pupils know right from wrong and resolve conflicts sensibly. Although not formally planned and monitored, the school provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral values. They respond particularly well to learning about people in circumstances or cultures different from their own, and thus develop empathy and an acceptance of people's differences. Each term the school highlights a language, taken from the many that are spoken by pupils' families. This promotes pupils' understanding of other cultures. It also raises the self-esteem of the pupils whose language is chosen, and their pride in their heritage.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching was good or outstanding in almost all the lessons observed. Teachers plan meticulously, ensuring that teaching is usually targeted to the specific needs of individuals. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they provide interesting and stimulating tasks so that pupils engage well and concentrate hard. In one outstanding lesson pupils' debating and writing skills were promoted exceptionally well through the pros and cons of building a new supermarket in a community. Pupils saw the relevance of their tasks to real life because the building site in question could be seen through the classroom window. Pupils and teachers use ICT very effectively to support learning. Teaching assistants are experienced and knowledgeable, and are proactive in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' feedback to pupils usually shows them clearly how well they are doing and how to improve. In mathematics, marking is completed but written advice is less detailed.

The curriculum is vibrant and exciting. It maximises pupils' own interests and provides opportunities for indoor and outdoor learning for pupils of all ages, making good use of the school pond, vegetable garden, woodland area and field. There are residential opportunities, as well as a good range of out of school activities in sports and the arts, all of which enjoy high take-up rates. The curriculum meets the needs of most groups, but is better adjusted for lower attaining pupils than for the more able.

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Pupils are very well known as individuals. They are well supported as they prepare to move to the next phases of their education. The school is successful in enabling pupils to settle down who have joined the school after experiencing difficulties elsewhere. Although much good work is done to improve attendance, patterns of absence are not always rigorously analysed. This means that particular issues complicating attendance for some families are not always tackled effectively. However, inspectors were shown important examples of where the school has helped individuals overcome other significant barriers to their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has galvanised the staff into an effective team. Leaders and managers make good use of monitoring and evaluation to identify areas in need of improvement, and their actions are effective in bringing about change. The curriculum, for example, has improved. Teaching quality is rigorously monitored, and teachers are quick to respond to feedback, building on their strengths and tackling weaknesses. Progress, of individuals and of groups, is also robustly analysed. Although a very diverse community, the school goes to great lengths to ensure that all pupils have an equal chance to thrive and that no-one 'slips through the net'. No pupil is denied access to any activity on cost or any other grounds.

Governance is good. Governors make both formal and informal visits and offer a robust challenge to headteacher and staff. They take up opportunities to receive training. At the time of the inspection all statutory requirements for the safeguarding of children were in place. The school regularly reviews its systems and procedures. It is meticulous in carrying out risk assessments so as to maximise pupils' safety.

The school regularly analyses parents' views through questionnaires and other channels. Parents receive good quality guidance on how to support their children's learning. The school takes care to involve parents and carers who find it difficult to engage with education. It also draws on a wide range of partners for the benefit of the pupils. These include local businesses, members of the local council, charities, and churches as well as other schools with whom joint activities are arranged, and agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

The school's overseas links, including Australia and the Philippines, as well as its links with schools in different parts of Britain, make a major contribution to the outstanding promotion of community cohesion. The school has an incisive understanding of its own

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cultural and socio-economic context. It seeks to break down barriers between communities and to promote the self-esteem of diverse community groups.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with knowledge and skills below those expected, sometimes well below in communication and language skills. They make good progress through both Nursery and Reception years, and by the end of the Reception year they reach broadly average levels in most areas of learning, although they are still below in writing and in creative development. Behaviour is good.

The good progress results from good teaching and especially good teamwork between the adults. Children are quickly helped to settle into routines. They confidently leave their parents and carers and enjoy being at school, as their parents readily testify. The accommodation is good with a very well-resourced outdoor area. Children develop their physical skills well, and most communication skills improve rapidly, although writing remains an area of slower progress for some. They quickly learn letter sounds and enjoy work based on reading books. For example, in one good phonics session they could pick out rhyming words accurately. Outdoors the children grow plants and vegetables, which are then cooked in the school kitchen. Children respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. They happily help adults to garden or to tidy up. There is good use of new technology and the older children can register themselves on the interactive whiteboards.

Teachers and other adults regularly observe and record children's learning both formally through specific tasks, and informally during routine activities. This assessment provides an accurate and detailed picture of children's learning. The coordinator is aware of areas needing development.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The responses given in the questionnaires mirror very closely those regularly collected by the school in internal surveys. They show high levels of satisfaction with the school, in particular with the quality of teaching and the way the school keeps children safe. Without exception, all responses agreed that their child enjoys school. A few parents or carers expressed concern about behaviour, so inspectors checked this closely. They saw behaviour that was good, and at times exceptional. Staff are particularly careful to ensure that the school's high expectations of behaviour are communicated effectively to new arrivals.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at John Clifford Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 326 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	65	43	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	65	42	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	69	57	47	39	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	49	50	41	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	84	69	37	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	65	53	53	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	54	51	42	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	41	53	43	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	43	57	47	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	34	61	50	10	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	34	56	46	9	7	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	70	57	47	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	61	47	39	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Clifford Primary School, Nottingham, NG9 2AT

A big 'thank you' to everyone for the welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We came to find out what your school does well and how it might be improved. We think you go to a good school. In particular:

- teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable; this means that you concentrate well, work hard, and make good progress
- you get on very well with one another, and you understand a lot about the local community as well as communities further afield; you also take on many responsibilities within school and the wider community
- your teachers look after you well, and make sure that everyone is able to take part in what the school offers
- your behaviour is good; teachers make sure that you act considerately at all times
- you understand about the need to stay healthy and you say that the school makes sure you are safe.

Although you are progressing well at present, we have suggested to your teachers that they should aim for you to reach even higher standards, particularly in mathematics. We would like to see these improve year by year! The attendance of a few pupils could also be a lot better.

It was a great pleasure to visit your school. You can all make sure it goes from strength to strength by continuing to behave well and always doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

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