

Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121557
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359035
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Bratt
Headteacher	Mr Brian Beresford
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
School address	The Green Clapham, Lancaster Lancashire LA2 8EJ
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by three teachers, held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff and attended an act of collective worship. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding procedures, documentation, including school and national data on pupil progress, policies, development plans, local authority reports and samples of pupils' work. Questionnaires from pupils, staff and the 26 returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of actions to tackle areas for improvement from the previous inspection, in particular to raise attainment in writing and mathematics.
- The way the curriculum is being developed.
- The contribution of all leaders and managers in planning improvements to ensure the capacity for further development is good or better.

Information about the school

Clapham CE School is much smaller than other schools. Children are taught in two mixed-age classes and transfer to middle school at the end of Year 5. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

There have been significant changes since the previous inspection. In January 2010, Clapham entered into a confederation with two other small village schools and a new headteacher was appointed and leads all three schools. Further changes will take place in September 2012 when middle school provision ends and pupils will remain until the end of Year 6.

The school holds Enhanced Healthy School status and an Eco Schools award and is designated as a flagship school for the Food for Life partnership. Clapham Early Years Group meets in the school hall on four mornings each week. This provision was inspected separately and receives a separate report which is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school successfully achieves its aim to ensure, 'pupils enjoy their childhood while developing their full potential'. Strong, dedicated leadership and the 'can do' approach of the headteacher have inspired a vigorous sense of purpose and commitment. Pupils are extremely well cared for, guided and supported in the calm ethos and their happiness shines through their considerate, respectful attitudes and high rates of attendance. They feel very safe, behave extremely well and are unfailingly welcoming, helpful and polite to staff, classmates and visitors. Parents and carers expressed very positive views. 'I wish my school was like this when I was their age', and, 'My children's educational and personal development needs are met far beyond my expectations', were typical comments.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Very small cohorts mean outcomes vary greatly from year to year. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start, enhanced by very close interaction with Clapham Early Years Group. Progress is good in all subjects. Successful actions, including better quality teaching have boosted standards in writing and mathematics. Well-targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or learning English as an additional language ensures they make good and sometimes excellent progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Excellent partnerships have enhanced staff professional development and raised the quality of teaching to good overall, with some outstanding features. For example, staff provide challenging yet enjoyable tasks for the different ages and abilities in their class. Good quality assessment systems track progress carefully and give clear information from which to set challenging individual targets which pupils work hard to reach. The outstanding curriculum successfully captures their interest and imagination through a very rich variety of meaningful academic, artistic, sporting and social activities. Further development of the curriculum to embed it in all three confederation schools, ready for the future, is at an early stage of planning.

Searching self-review procedures enabled leaders and managers to implement strategies that have successfully improved all aspects of provision. Leaders, managers and staff all make a strong contribution and share a passionate commitment to the vision for ongoing improvement. Well-focused development plans demonstrate that the school knows exactly what needs to be done to reach challenging targets. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement, and the school gives excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strong links with the confederation schools by developing a curriculum that is common to all three, while retaining the individual characteristics of each, in preparation for future changes.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Lesson observations and discussions with pupils show very high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. Excellent behaviour and cooperative attitudes result in good achievement. Pupils use and develop their skills across a range of subjects, for example writing about making and using compost in a science lesson or creating lively illustrated stories of medieval knights capturing gold in a mathematics activity.

Skills on entry to school vary greatly between cohorts. School and national comparative data show standards are above average when pupils leave Year 5. All pupil groups progress well, with some examples of excellent progress. For example, pupils become fluent readers and articulate, confident speakers, able to use imaginative vocabulary when explaining their ideas and answers. By building on these skills, staff have improved pupils' ability to plan and organise their writing, and focused actions are boosting their ability to solve mathematical problems.

Enjoyment and appreciation of the world around and a reflective approach to issues and life choices demonstrate outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A keen sense of right and wrong results in very high levels of care for each other and older pupils are always protective of younger ones. They say there are no dangers at school, think behaviour is good and bullying is not a problem and trust the staff to help them. They have an excellent understanding of health matters, participate keenly in physical activities, are proud of their organic garden and relish Food for Life cookery sessions. Pupils are eager to contribute to village and church life so the school is very much at the heart of the community. Pupils are well aware of other lifestyles and religions found in Britain's multicultural society. Outstanding personal and social skills, good academic standards and high attendance are an excellent basis for pupils' future economic well-being.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Pupils enjoy their lessons, saying they are always, 'a bit of a challenge'. Teaching has outstanding features in the way staff swiftly spot and build on pupils' interests and their skill in planning for different ages and abilities. Excellent relationships and behaviour in all lessons ensure progress is always good or better. Teachers self-assess and are constantly seeking to improve their practice, recognising when the pace is a little slow, or they talk for too long. Good assessment systems give a clear picture of progress and provide useful information when planning lessons and tasks, and to direct help where needed. Pupils feel very well supported and say teachers' written prompts help them improve their work and reach their targets.

The curriculum offers an excellent, well-balanced range of memorable academic, personal and social activities, often specifically tailored to respond to an individual pupil's interests; the superheroes topic really inspires younger boys. Very careful adaptations ensure all pupils make good progress in learning and develop into mature, responsible members of society. The headteacher is leading the innovative curriculum development for the confederation. Pupils have many opportunities to use and develop literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum. Themed days and weeks, visitors and extra-curricular clubs enrich their experience very effectively, and one pupil spoke for many with the words, 'We have brilliant trips', for example residential trips shared with other schools.

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Every pupil really matters and their individual needs are met through care, guidance and support of the highest quality. The main building provides a welcoming, secure environment, much improved with the ICT suite, but the older pupils' classroom is difficult to maintain to a similar standard. Highly positive relationships between home and school ensure there is, as parents and carers say, 'A genuine partnership between pupils, teachers and parents'. Any pupils who are vulnerable because of their circumstances are supported extremely well, and there are strong links with all external professional agencies. Excellent induction and transition arrangements ensure pupils move confidently between classes and on to the next stage of 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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

High aspirations, extensive professional development, outstanding partnership activities and challenging performance management targets have resulted in sustained and significant improvement since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have inspired the community with a strong vision for the school's future and staff morale is very high. Governors provide outstanding support and were instrumental in developing the confederation. Their extensive professional expertise enables them to challenge the school rigorously and ensure all health, safety and safeguarding procedures are fully in place.

Exemplary links and an 'open door' approach enable parents and carers to play a full part in their children's education. They are regularly invited to lunch with their children and kept very well informed through meetings, newsletters and reports. Clear, accessible channels enable them to communicate with staff or the headteacher and the school seeks and responds to their views. Outstanding partnerships with the confederation, local schools, and other professional groups have improved the quality of teaching and extended pupils' experiences in ways the school alone cannot. The school is externally recognised as a flagship for Food for Life and leads others in developing personal and social education.

The promotion of equal opportunities is at the centre of the school's ethos, so all groups achieve well and participate fully in all activities. For example, there are lunchtime clubs so those who travel home on school buses can attend. Exemplary safeguarding arrangements, health, safety and risk assessments ensure pupils and users of the building are always safe and secure. Child protection training for all staff is up to date and all procedures understood. Outstanding community cohesion provision ensures pupils learn, play and care for each other very happily and harmoniously. The school has a very clear understanding of the community it serves, and contributes to village life, for example by

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planting bee-friendly plants to support local bee keepers. Sharing residential visits with schools from very different localities develop pupils' awareness of and respect for different communities and ways of life in the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry vary greatly from year to year. Language, communication, personal and social skills are usually a little below those typical for their age. Excellent care and welfare arrangements ensure children feel very safe, secure and happy in the warm welcoming atmosphere which most know well from attending the Early Years Group. The exciting range of well-planned activities stimulates children's natural curiosity so they are keen to investigate and enjoy learning. They make good and often better progress, so by the end of Reception, children reach the expected levels and are often working into the next level.

Staff skilfully build children's confidence so they become increasingly independent, selecting activities indoors, outside or choosing to work with the Early Years Group. They enjoy healthy snacks, know how to care for themselves and be safe, share and use equipment carefully, and follow routines happily. Good teaching provides a well-balanced mix of activities led by adults and those children select themselves. An outstanding feature of teaching is the way children's interests are spotted and followed up. One child had counted swallows at home, so staff used this to develop addition skills, and then took the children outside to photograph nests in the school roof. The strong focus on language and letter sounds ensure children progress rapidly in gaining early reading and writing skills.

Excellent leadership has created a strong staff team, highly committed to meeting the unique needs of every child by constantly seeking to improve provision. Extremely positive

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relationships with parents and carers and induction arrangements, including home visits add to children's feelings of security and enjoyment of school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Over 75% of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Responses to all questions were extremely positive, and all agreed their children enjoy school. A few feel their suggestions are not taken account of and a very small minority of written comments said communication could be better. The inspector discussed these points with the school. The school has well-established lines of communications, an 'open door' policy and is willing to arrange meetings or telephone discussions with parents and carers at convenient times and places.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 inspector received 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 35 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	50	13	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	62	9	35	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	46	14	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	50	11	42	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	62	10	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	50	13	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	58	11	42	0	0	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)	10	38	9	35	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	46	14	54	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	42	13	50	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	38	12	46	4	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	38	15	58	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	46	13	50	1	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



25 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 8EJ

A very big thank you for welcoming me during the inspection, especially to the school council and others who gave up their playtimes to meet with me. You were all very friendly, helpful and polite, and your excellent behaviour is a credit to your families and teachers. You told me how much you enjoy school and said, 'nothing could be better'. Your parents and carers are very happy with the school, too. I even heard one of you on the radio on 'Gardeners Question Time' asking about plants that attract bees, and you must be the only school that has a school hen! This is what I found during the inspection.

Clapham is an outstanding school, with excellent leaders, managers and governors who care for you extremely well and keep you very safe. You are taught well, make good progress and reach standards above those expected for your age. The excellent curriculum provides lots of different experiences and activities, including clubs like gardening and chess, sports, learning French and musical instruments. I know you enjoy cooking, visits and trips and performing in the school orchestra with your partner schools.

The leaders and staff are always trying to make your school even better. So I have asked them to complete the work on the curriculum to be shared with the schools in the confederation.

I really enjoyed my time at Clapham School and will always remember my visit. I send you my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector

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