

Cliff Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124647
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380945
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Leek
Headteacher	Jane Needle
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 12 teachers in 20 lessons. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff. Different aspects of the school's work were observed and documentation scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as responses to questionnaires from 121 parents and carers.

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

- Is the school ensuring that attainment and progress in Years 5 and 6 broadly match recent outcomes and that the slower rates of progress are being successfully addressed in Years 1 to 4?
- To what extent are teaching and assessment practice effective given the high turnover in staff?
- How effective are the governing body and the new senior leadership team in driving school improvement?
- Are children in Early Years Foundation Stage making sufficient progress for provision to be good?

Information about the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. It has undergone substantial change over the last year with a new senior leadership team and a mostly new team of teachers. It has a rising school roll and there has been major building work to accommodate the increasing number of pupils. While the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, about a third are of minority ethnic heritage and half of these speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained Healthy Schools status, the Sports Activemark and is an FA Charter school.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is successfully overcoming a very difficult period where a lack of school leadership and substantial turnover in teaching staff resulted in a decline in pupils' attainment and progress. The largely new school leadership and teaching staff are demonstrating increasing success in improving provision.

The most recent end of Year 6 national test results indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school to reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data indicates that pupils in the current Years 4 to 6 are expected to match or exceed recent results, although attainment and progress in younger years are relatively weaker, particularly in writing. The effective support the school provides for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them do as well as other pupils. Similarly, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language, make consistently satisfactory or better progress. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their lessons, even if some do not work as hard as they should. Pupils say that they feel safe and that behaviour in lessons is usually good, but some are concerned about a small minority who are boisterous and inconsiderate in play areas and around the school. A considerable number of pupils take on responsibilities and most demonstrate a commitment to healthy lifestyles, with many participating in sports and other activities.

Parents and carers are positive about the teaching their children receive, which is at least satisfactory and increasingly good. Relationships are good and staff mostly succeed in providing attractive classrooms and engaging lessons. Much effort has been spent devising work schemes that capture pupils' interest and help them to develop their literacy and numeracy. This is particularly so in those years where writing skills are less developed, although changes are too recent to show impact. The best lessons are well focused on clear and specific learning outcomes with good use of support staff. However, it is not always clear what the teacher wants each pupil to realistically achieve by the end of the lesson. There is good support in lessons for the less able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but the more able are often less well challenged. Marking is positive and explains how pupils can improve their work but teachers are less consistent in ensuring pupils respond to the 'next step' guidance and have the time to do so. Staff are starting to link their marking to pupils' National Curriculum targets but this is not done consistently across the school. Care and guidance is effective in supporting vulnerable pupils and others with special educational needs and/or disabilities within

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the school. A recently devised behaviour strategy encourages safe and considerate behaviour in its drive to make this a more inclusive school. The strategy has yet to be consistently used by all staff and understood by parents and carers, some of whom regard misbehaviour to be a major concern.

The developing leadership team is led by a headteacher with a successful record of school improvement and an experienced and effective deputy headteacher. Working with a much improved governing body, the senior leaders have a very good understanding of the priorities for school improvement. Morale is high and staff have actively embraced their often new roles as subject coordinators. They cooperate actively with each other. Recent changes are beginning to take effect. The different areas of provision are at least satisfactory and improving, pupil attendance is better and pupils are starting to make better progress in most years. With such a relatively new staff, leadership and management is still developing and there is a recognition that the school has yet to fully establish clear lines of accountability and monitoring and evaluation procedures in what is a large and growing school. Nonetheless, the school has a strong and experienced leadership and an accurate picture of its key strengths and weaknesses, giving it a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and assessment in order to enable all pupils to make good progress by:
 - ensuring learning activities are sufficiently challenging for all pupils, especially the more able
 - providing more time and encouragement for pupils to respond to teachers' guidance as to how they can improve their work
 - linking pupils' learning targets more explicitly to the National Curriculum levels used in the school's tracking so that pupils have clearer goals for improvement.

- Promote good behaviour across the school by:
 - ensuring consistent implementation of the school's agreed behaviour strategies
 - keeping parents and carers informed and helping them better understand the school's strategies.

- Extend leadership and management across the school by;
 - establishing clear lines of accountability and effective monitoring and evaluation procedures
 - developing the roles of middle leaders and their teams.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils now join Year 1 with broadly average standards, which represents an improvement over the previous year as a result of better provision in the Reception Year. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress over their time in school, although the rate of progress has hitherto varied considerably, being slower in Years 1 to 3 in developing literacy, but faster in subsequent years. Pupils reach average standards by the time they leave. In a Year 6 English lesson on journalistic writing, pupils produced extended writing in character using a range of connectives to reach standards that were average or above. By contrast, in a Year 2 lesson, a considerable number of pupils lacked sufficient handwriting skills to convey their thoughts, with little appreciation of punctuation, and standards were well below the national average.

Pupils like coming to school and their attendance has improved. It is average and rising. There are many thoughtful and responsible pupils who are actively involved as school council members, play leaders and monitors. Pupils have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and respond positively to healthy eating initiatives. The school council is currently promoting a fruit bar at breaktimes. Pupils enjoy being active, as is evident in their high take-up of sports and physical activities. They mostly feel safe and well supported, but some are concerned about the silly behaviour of a few who push and shove others. In assemblies, pupils readily respond to questions, listen carefully and sing with enthusiasm. Pupils like their lessons and mostly behave well, but there is still a number who take too long to settle down to work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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

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

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The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have quickly established good relationships and manage their lessons effectively. They provide interesting lessons that have clear purpose, but they do not consistently set specific targets in lessons that encourage pupils to finish their work. There is considerable focus on improving pupils’ writing and numeracy, including cross-curricular opportunities in different subjects such as science and the humanities. For example, a good Year 4 science lesson, on dental care, also provided an opportunity for pupils to practise and be assessed in their skills in writing up an experiment. The curriculum also has a strong focus on developing reading and writing through phonics, which gets pupils to relate letters and sounds. Work continues too in providing more ‘fun’ learning to encourage pupils’ engagement.

A number of parents and carers took the time to write about the considerable efforts made to settle their children in school, especially when the child has a particular medical or learning need. The school has developed a thorough if unwieldy system for tracking the progress of individuals and groups. It uses this effectively to plan different interventions and support. This has particularly helped those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Links with a range of different agencies and the local community play an important role in supporting the school’s work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are rapidly establishing practices and procedures aimed at delivering significant and sustainable school improvement. Partnerships are satisfactory because, while there are established links with social agencies supporting the school’s care, guidance and support, the relative newness of staff means they have yet to develop a wide range of visits, visitors and other links to enrich the curriculum. Similarly, links that broaden pupils’ awareness of the wider society are a further area for development, although there are plans for pupils to have more direct experience of other cultures, faiths and beliefs at both national and international level.

In its efforts to become a more inclusive school, staff carefully track and support all groups and individuals. There are few consistent or significant differences in

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achievement, for example between boys and girls or between different ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as others but there is some evidence of underachievement for some higher ability pupils in mathematics and lower ability pupils in writing.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established an effective leadership team and are working to develop other colleagues such as the acting Early Years Foundation Stage leader. There are talented and committed subject coordinators but currently no middle leaders, although senior leaders recognise the need for clear lines of accountability across the whole school. The governing body has become more actively involved in school since the appointment of the headteacher. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is supportive and better informed than previously. It contributes particular specialist strengths in areas such as health and safety. The school meets all its obligations for safeguarding and now has a rigorous policy review cycle.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join Nursery with skills and capabilities which are a little below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and have broadly average attainment in most areas, including their personal, social, emotional and physical development, by the time they move to Year 1. Most cooperate and share activities, although some of the younger children take time to develop their confidence and need, and receive, appropriate support. Improvements in provision, including helping children link letters and sounds, are now enabling them to make better progress in developing their reading, writing and some aspects of number. Children feel safe and behaviour is mostly good although, in the afternoons, some of the Reception class

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children are unsettled and need reminders to behave sensibly and safely.

Significant physical improvements have been made to the inside and outside areas. There is a good range of learning resources, although the sheer quantity makes the Reception class appear rather cramped. Adults have a sound knowledge of Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and provide a satisfactory and, on occasion, good range of learning experiences, particularly in the Nursery class. Adults generally manage behaviour well and there is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that are helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding as well as their physical and social skills.

The acting Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a good start in developing an effective team which is in the process of identifying best practice that can be implemented consistently across the Nursery and Reception Years. Assessment has improved considerably and is used appropriately to compile children’s learning journals and plan children’s future learning opportunities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are unanimous in saying their children like school. In spite of the substantial changes in teaching staff, the great majority consider their children are well taught and making sufficient progress. Parents and carers who have children with specific learning and medical needs value the additional help and support their children receive. A number of parents and carers comment positively on the strong leadership of the new headteacher and improvements in the quality of teaching. However, the misbehaviour of a relatively small number of pupils, particularly outside of lessons, concerns a considerable number of parents and carers, many of whom feel the school has yet to devise an effective and consistent behaviour policy. Inspectors found pupils enjoyed their lessons and most behaved well, but some pupils reported that, in play outside, a few could be inconsiderate. The school has developed a new behaviour improvement strategy but this not been consistently used by all staff or fully communicated to parents and carers, some of whom feel their concerns have not been responded to.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cliff Lane 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 403 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	55	54	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	40	65	54	3	2	4	3
The school informs me about my child’s progress	31	26	85	70	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	33	77	64	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	36	71	59	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	33	27	79	65	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	25	79	65	8	7	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)	26	21	80	66	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	30	25	81	67	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	24	56	46	25	21	9	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	25	65	54	16	13	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	38	31	63	52	13	11	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	45	37	64	53	10	8	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 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.

23 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Cliff Lane Primary School, Ipswich, IP3 0PJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education, and ensures that most of you achieve satisfactorily by the time you leave.

Your improving attendance shows that you like coming to school. In lessons, we could see how well you work together and listen carefully to the teacher. We noted that many of you take responsibility as school council members, playleaders and monitors. Your commitment to healthy lifestyles can be seen in your promotion of healthy eating through your proposed fruit bar and your participation in the gardening club and a wide range of activities and sports.

Very many of your parents and carers told us how much you enjoy your lessons but confirmed that some of you were concerned about the thoughtless and inconsiderate behaviour of a few. To address this, we have asked the school to make sure that all staff use the agreed procedures to improve the behaviour of some and make sure all of your parents and carers understand those procedures. Many of your teachers have joined the school in the last year and are helping to improve your work. To help you make even better progress we have asked them to set out what exactly they want you to learn in each lesson. We have also asked them to match classwork more closely to your individual needs and make sure you are all fully challenged, especially those of you that find the work too easy. We were impressed with the care your teachers take to mark your work regularly and explain what you need to do next to improve it. This is very important and we have asked them to give you more time in and out of lessons to follow your teachers' suggestions and improve your work so you can better meet your reading, writing and mathematics targets. You can help by always taking care to read and follow your teachers' advice.

We have asked the headteacher and governing body to ensure more staff play an active part in helping the school to improve. You can also all help by attending school regularly, improving your work, particularly in writing, and playing an active part in school life. Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston
Lead inspector

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