

Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119291
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379770
Inspection dates	7–8 December 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevan Waby
Headteacher	Paul Slater
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by nine teachers and met with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at data on attainment and progress, pupils' work, documents and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding), school policies and improvement plans. Questionnaires from staff and pupils and the 87 returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- The effectiveness of strategies to raise attainment in English at Key Stage 2, particularly in writing.
- The way the curriculum impacts on pupils' engagement in their learning.
- How effectively pupils are involved in the assessment of their learning so they know how to improve their work.
- How well leaders and managers at all levels contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement.

Information about the school

Clifton Primary School is an average sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion from other ethnic backgrounds is well below average and only a few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average and so is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school offers a before and after school club each day. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school during their primary years. Since the last inspection, there has been some lack of continuity at senior leadership level whilst the headteacher acted as associate headteacher of another school. He will become the substantive headteacher there in January 2012 and a new headteacher has been appointed to take up post at Clifton in February 2012.

The school holds Healthy School status and has gained numerous awards, including an Active Mark, Investor in People, Race Equality and two Eco Green Flag awards.

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

This is a good school. Outstanding features are the way pupils are cared for, guided and supported, their excellent behaviour, their contribution to the community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and are clearly very happy and proud of their school. 'It's brilliant!' was a typical comment. They have a good knowledge of health issues and are caring and considerate towards each other. Responses in the questionnaires returned by parents and carers were extremely positive.

Achievement is good for all pupil groups and attainment is broadly average, although slightly weaker in English, especially in writing in Key Stage 2. Children start school with the overall level of skills just below those expected for their age. They make a good start and progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because they are taught well and are enthusiastic learners. Well-organised support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language ensures they progress well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Concerted actions have increased pupils' confidence as writers but occasionally tasks are not well matched to their different abilities. In addition, errors in spelling and punctuation, and inconsistently formed handwriting detract from the overall quality of written work.

Assessment systems provide good quality progress information and involve pupils so they know their targets. In their questionnaires, pupils agreed that teachers' marking motivates them and gives points to improve, but this is not found consistently in the marking of writing. Enriched curriculum experiences and activities successfully engage pupils so they are keen to learn. These include themed weeks and days, such as Health and Fitness Week or World Book Day, visits and visitors.

A clear vision for improvement is firmly embedded and staff morale is high. Senior leaders, managers and governors know their school well and self-evaluate performance and outcomes rigorously and accurately. However, middle managers' and subject leaders' role in impacting fully on school improvement is at an early stage. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has been raised from satisfactory to good, so indicating good capacity for further improvement. The school gives excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing, particularly at Key Stage 2 by:
 - improving pupils' spelling and use of punctuation
 - embedding the recently introduced handwriting scheme
 - ensuring work is always matched to pupils' different abilities
 - making sure the marking of writing consistently gives pupils points for improvement.
- Further develop the skills of middle managers and subject leaders so they participate fully in the drive for school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Enjoyment of learning was evident in all lessons, in discussions with pupils and in the responses in questionnaires from pupils and their parents and carers. Pupils are very enthusiastic when faced with new tasks and work hard. They are keen to succeed and cooperate willingly with staff and their classmates, which aids their learning and progress. Pupils aim to present their work carefully but a well formed, consistent handwriting style is not yet fully in place.

Up to two thirds of each cohort's pupils can change over time, due to the higher than average level of pupil movement both into and out of the school. In previous years, some of those who joined later, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6 made satisfactory rather than good progress. This has been rigorously addressed, and lesson observations, the work in pupils' books and assessment information show that all groups of pupils progress well during their time in school. Pupils read well, which supports their learning in all subjects. They speak confidently and use interesting vocabulary when expressing ideas and explaining their answers. Recent improvements in writing can be seen in pupils' work due to well-planned strategies, such as work based on a visit to see a Christmas film, but these have yet to impact fully on raising attainment.

Excellent moral values and concern for others are demonstrated by the comment, 'We are all friendly and help each other.' Pupils feel entirely safe in school and know they can talk to and trust staff to sort out any problems. Consequently, bullying is not seen as an issue. Pupils know how to care for their own safety, for example, when using the internet, roads or on water. They know the importance of looking after their health through diet and exercise, and consider emotional matters and questions in the secure setting of the classroom. Healthy Schools Team and school councillors work to improve the school and take their responsibilities very seriously, for example, successfully requesting the playground be divided into zones. Above-average attendance, positive attitudes and strong personal and academic skills ensure pupils are prepared well for the future.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils typically comment that, 'Lessons are fun' and, 'Teachers are good at asking questions so they know what you know.' Where teaching is good or better, pupils progress well because teaching styles are imaginative, resources are used well, expectations are high and effective questioning stimulates thinking skills. Where there is too much reliance on worksheets or tasks are not well matched to different abilities, progress is satisfactory rather than good. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Good assessment systems provide clear progress information and pupils are involved in setting their targets. Teachers encourage pupils to self-assess their work, marking usually includes improvement points and, in some classes, pupils are encouraged to respond to these points. However, these strategies are not consistently applied in the marking of pupils' writing.

The well organised curriculum prioritises literacy and numeracy skills and links between subjects through different topics make learning more meaningful. Lessons often include research using information and communication technology (ICT). Suitable adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language ensure that they progress as well as their classmates. Spanish, German, music and physical education broaden and enrich pupils' experiences and cultural development effectively, often through specialist teaching, for example, instrumental tuition. Pupils enjoy visits that bring lessons to life. For example, Year 5 visited Liverpool Museum as part of their study of Ancient Egypt. The good personal and social education programme ensures pupils know how to keep themselves safe, healthy and make informed life choices. After school clubs are varied and popular.

The school is a welcoming, well maintained environment, where pupils say, 'Everyone takes care of us.' Care, guidance and support of the highest quality ensure

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

individual emotional or learning needs are carefully considered and met. Any pupils who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances are supported extremely well, and there are good links with all external professional agencies. Before and after school provision is well organised, and those who attend enjoy the varied activities on offer. 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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A clear vision and ambitious aspirations for ongoing improvement are shared by leaders, managers, governors and staff. Middle managers and subject leaders evaluate their areas but their level of contribution to overall school improvement is satisfactory rather than good. Thorough analysis of performance data and rigorous actions by senior leaders have resulted in improvements; for example, successfully boosting progress and raising the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Performance management strategies based on outcomes of the monitoring of teaching and learning are closely reflected in improvement plans. The skilled governing body ensured management systems ran smoothly during the headteacher's secondment. Governors understand what the school does well and what needs improving, and support the school while holding leaders and managers to account.

Pupils benefit from excellent relationships between home and school. Newsletters, a useful home-school partnership booklet, three annual parents' evenings and the virtual learning network provide open lines of communication and information for parents and carers to support learning at home. Good quality partnerships provide experiences the school alone cannot, for example, links with the High School for food technology projects, a music day and ICT. Arrangements to promote and ensure equal opportunities are good, ensuring all groups of pupils progress well and participate fully in the life of the school; for example, teachers ensure they direct appropriate questions to each pupil group so they are all involved.

Good procedures for pupils' care and protection meet all current requirements, ensuring pupils and users of the building and site are always safe. Robust child-protection arrangements include clear management responsibilities. The governing body is in the process of reviewing their training in this area. Leaders and managers understand the school's social, religious and economic context. Pupils learn about and respect different world religions, and 'One World Week' adds a global dimension.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are taught in a Reception class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Skills on entry vary and have declined in recent years to just below those typically found, especially in language and communication. Excellent care means children settle quickly and happily in the welcoming atmosphere, supported by strong relationships with parents and carers. Boys and girls and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. By the time they leave, most are working at the expected levels, and above expected levels in their personal and social skills.

Good teaching provides an exciting range of interesting activities for children to investigate and explore, carefully balanced between those led by adults and those initiated by children themselves. Each morning, children are encouraged to make independent choices from a list of activities on offer. The firm focus on language development ensures oral skills progress quickly; children excitedly discussed the Snowman story whilst writing invitations to their forthcoming party. Secure, high quality relationships between staff and children result in excellent behaviour. Children happily share equipment, take turns and show care and consideration for each other. There have been significant developments in outdoor provision which are starting to see more activities each day so children can enjoy learning outside in the fresh air.

Leadership and management are good and ensure that all Early Years Foundation Stage requirements are fully met. Children's progress is carefully monitored and very high quality welfare arrangements are securely in place. The staff team is strongly committed to ensuring children are happy and progressing well in all areas of their learning and individual personal development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage		2
Taking into account:		
	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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around 35% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The vast majority agree their child enjoys school and is kept safe there. The very large majority are happy with their child’s experience, their progress and the teaching. A few feel their child is not well prepared for the future. Inspectors discussed this with the school. There are very secure arrangements to familiarise children with their next class and teacher. Throughout Key Stage 2, children go to the High School and use specialist facilities such as ICT, sports and food technology.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clifton 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	78	18	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	76	19	22	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	49	39	45	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	53	35	40	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	59	68	24	28	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	57	30	34	3	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	68	22	25	0	0	3	3
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)	52	60	26	30	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	60	28	32	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	53	36	41	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	48	38	44	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	62	71	19	22	0	0	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	76	17	20	1	1	2	2

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clifton Primary School, Lytham St Annes FY8 3PY

The inspectors would like to thank you for welcoming and helping us. A special 'thank you' goes to the pupils who talked to us at lunchtime. We were very impressed by the proud way you talk about your school and by your excellent behaviour; you are a credit to your teachers and your families! It was good to see you in the hall, enjoying Christmas dinner and singing songs. Your parents and carers are pleased that you enjoy school. This is what we found.

Clifton is a good school with good leaders and managers. They take excellent care of you so you feel safe and secure. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives you a good start. You are taught well, make good progress and reach the right standards for your age, but we think standards should be higher in writing. We also think some of the subject leaders could be more involved in helping to improve the school.

So we have asked the leaders and managers to:

- help you to improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting
- provide different writing tasks for all the groups in your class and make sure your work is always marked
- make sure all the leaders contribute fully to make your school even better.

You make an exemplary contribution to the school and the community, so we know you will want to do all you can to help them.

We send you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur
Lead inspector

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