

Cliff Lane Primary School

Cliff Lane, Ipswich, IP3 0PJ

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is too variable across key stages. As a result, pupils do not do as well as they should.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is slower than it should be. This means that some pupils join Key Stage 2 without the key reading and writing skills they need to succeed.
- Over the previous three years, pupils have not done as well as they might by the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have not implemented rigorous monitoring systems to improve the quality of teaching to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils in all parts of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is not always good around school when teachers are not directly supervising them.
- Governors are not sufficiently well informed about the progress of groups of pupils to challenge leaders and teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- A focus on teaching mathematics has improved results considerably.
- Subjects are linked together well into topics that make lessons interesting.
- Results are rising, particularly in Key Stage 2, as a result of some good teaching.
- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 22 lessons and part lessons and observing all teachers.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher and other leaders and managers, as well as representatives of the governing body and of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school’s development plan, records of the governing body meetings, safeguarding arrangements and work in pupils’ books.
- Parents and carers were asked for their views at the beginning and end of the school day and the views of the 34 parents and carers who contributed to the online Parent View survey were analysed.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school’s view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Simon Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ian Hart

Additional Inspector

Karen Feeney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional funding for particular groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is in line with the national average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - activities are planned that move pupils on to the next level
 - no time is wasted and lesson introductions are not too long so that pupils have enough time to complete their work
 - pupils have more opportunities to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour when not directly supervised
 - as a matter of urgency, teachers are supported by a clear programme for the teaching of letters and sounds and that they are fully trained to deliver this effectively
 - questioning is used to deepen and stretch pupils' understanding.
- Improve the impact of leadership by:
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus on the progress made by all groups of pupils
 - quickly putting in place a systematic programme of teaching letters and sounds, and monitoring its effectiveness
 - visiting classrooms regularly to check on the quality of teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds)
 - ensuring that assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accurate and used to drive forward learning
 - ensuring that subject leaders look closely at how well groups of pupils are doing and use the information to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress.
 - governors making sure they request regular and up-to-date reports on the performance of all groups of pupils and on the quality of teaching, and use this information to support and challenge school leaders more effectively.
- Improve progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that all activities have a learning purpose and that children are supported to make the most of them
 - making sure that children have enough opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills
 - checking the progress of each child regularly to plan activities to move them on more quickly

- making sure that the outdoor area is always well used
- ensuring that more-able children are given activities to help them make faster progress.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. Although the assessments made of their progress dipped last year, in previous years they have made the progress expected of them in most areas of learning. They are adequately prepared for Key Stage 1 but key skills in reading are not developed as well as other areas. More-able children do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is variable but enables pupils to join Key Stage 2 with broadly average levels in most areas. There is not yet a consistent scheme for the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) which is followed in all classes. As a result, pupils' progress in reading and writing is not as fast as it should be.
- Achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection. More pupils are on track to achieve higher levels.
- At Key Stage 2, clear improvements in achievement have been made. The most recent set of results indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels and making expected progress is above that found nationally.
- Mathematics, in particular, has improved sharply. In 2012, attainment and progress in mathematics at the end of Year 6 was too low but the school have successfully tackled this. All of the pupils last year made the progress they should and the proportion making more than expected progress rose from the previous year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have not made the progress they should have done in previous years. This is improving and these pupils are now making expected progress. They are generally well supported. However, in a few lessons, tasks are not always matched sufficiently to their needs.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium are now making the progress they should. This was not the case in 2012, when the gap between these pupils and other pupils was too wide. On average, these pupils were more than a year behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. The school tracks the performance of pupils supported by pupil premium carefully and this shows they are now making expected and sometimes better than expected progress.
- Results at the end of each key stage indicate that more-able pupils generally make the progress expected of them but, in some lessons, the work that is set is not hard enough for them.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching and it is not consistent across the school. Teachers are not always clear on exactly what it is that groups of pupils are expected to learn. As a result, pupils are not helped to make good progress in lessons.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage show curiosity for play and learning but there are too few opportunities for challenge. More-able children draw round stencils when they are able to form their own letters. Children play in the cafe but are not given enough guidance on choosing activities which will help them with their speaking and listening skills. The outside area has been underused at the start of term.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much better when children are able to use equipment outdoors, searching for insects and leaves, and are supported by photographs of what to look for.
- Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage collect good-quality evidence to show children's progress but the assessments made are not fully reliable and are therefore not as useful as they could be in planning high-quality learning activities.
- The teaching of letters and sounds does not give pupils enough chances to sound out words for themselves and carry their learning into reading and writing. Teachers are not supported by a set scheme of how this is to be taught throughout Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Teachers plan work that is different for groups of pupils but this is not always based on the exact steps needed to take them to the next level. As a result, pupils are sometimes unsure about what is expected of them.
- Teachers check learning during lessons but do not always use their questioning to deepen pupils' understanding; for example, when finding more interesting adjectives and adverbs to improve the quality of their writing. Questioning often accepts pupils' first answer rather than probing for a better one.
- Lesson introductions are often too long, with valuable teaching time taken by pupils writing and sticking objectives into their books. As a result, pupils do not produce enough writing and do not have the time to complete their work.
- Marking is often thorough and helpful but is not consistent across the school. Where it is used most effectively, pupils are given the opportunity to read and think about the suggestions for improvement.
- Teaching is improving and teachers make introductions to lessons more interesting and join up different subjects, such as mathematics, writing, art and design, into a topic; for example, the study of tornadoes. As a result, the teaching of writing is improving because pupils are interested in what it is they are writing about.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Teachers plan lessons which are relevant to the pupils' interests. Pupils enjoyed and made good progress when 'buying' items to set up a new home from catalogues within a restricted budget.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour of pupils is not as good in lessons and around school when teachers are not providing supervision.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, particularly when the teaching is interesting and matched to their needs. Their learning skills, for example, being able to work well independently or in groups, are not consistent across the school.
- Leaders have focused on behaviour and there is good evidence that it has improved: exclusion rates are down and the number of incidents are falling. Pupils say behaviour is usually good and that lessons are rarely disrupted. Challenging behaviour is well managed.

- Pupils generally move around the corridors well, though are sometimes excitable. In the dining hall, they talk calmly as they eat their dinners, though conditions are cramped and parents feel they are rushed to finish.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that while there are now very few incidents of most forms of bullying, some name-calling still occurs. Parents agree, and pupils are confident that any serious incidents of bullying that does occur are dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding of cyber-bullying.
- Attendance is below average but has improved over recent years. The school has worked closely with the local authority attendance officer to ensure that pupils come to school regularly and on time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet been successful in ensuring that all pupils reach the levels of which they are capable by the time they leave Key Stage 1. The monitoring of the new assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in particular, has not been sharp enough to ensure its reliability and use to plan activities for the children. Leaders have not visited classrooms regularly to check on how well phonics (linking letters and sounds) is taught.
- The curriculum rightly focuses on English and mathematics but is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of all pupils for it to ensure good progress. This means that the school is not successful in providing all pupils with an equal opportunity to succeed or in tackling discrimination. Useful partnerships extend pupils' spiritual awareness; for example, by visitors enacting the story of Jacob in assembly, and coaches from the local football club providing skilled training for pupils.
- Senior leaders are enthusiastic and keen to improve the school. However, they do not use data effectively to inform them sufficiently about how well groups of pupils are doing, for example, those supported by pupil premium compared to pupils in other schools.
- Leaders are showing the capacity to improve. A focus on mathematics, led by the deputy headteacher, has changed the way it is taught so that there are more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in real-life situations. This means they are enjoying the work more and pupils made much better progress last year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have made much improved progress in the last year as a result of the leader raising expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Leaders and managers observe teaching and it has improved as a result. However, judgements on the quality of teaching by leaders at all levels are sometimes based on what teachers are doing rather than on its impact on the progress made by different groups of pupils. Consequently, leaders sometimes have an overly positive view of the quality of teaching.
- Parents generally feel well informed about their children's progress. Parents say that the letters telling them about the topics to be studied are helpful. A few parents felt they found out about events and activities a little late.
- The school ensures that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet current requirements. During the inspection, some safety concerns were drawn to the inspectors' attention and were dealt with by school leaders straightaway.

■ The impact of the local authority has been varied. The Improvement Adviser has supported the school with lesson observations and the use of data, and leaders and managers have been invited to training events. Leaders and governors feel that the local authority has not challenged them where pupil performance was weaker than it should have been. Governors report that training has not moved them forward in their skills to challenge rigorously but they have not attended all the training made available to them. The school has received support with behaviour management, which has resulted in clear improvements. The school has found the local authority's Music Service to be particularly effective.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive and generally know the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not use the data available to compare the school's performance with schools nationally. Governors do not challenge the school effectively by looking at up-to-date progress information and asking hard questions about the performance of groups and the quality of teaching. Governors ensure that the school is financially sound but are not confident to check that spending decisions have had a good impact on pupils' learning. Governors are keen to improve. They are increasingly aware of the need to link teachers' pay progression with pupils' achievement. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been spent but, together with the primary school sport funding, have not regularly checked on how effective it has been.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124647
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	425291

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	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Leek
Headteacher	Jane Needle
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2011
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