

# John Clifford Primary School

Nether Street, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 2AT

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching to promote good progress across the school. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in English and mathematics.
- The work teachers set in some lessons is sometimes too easy or too hard for the pupils.
- Pupils capable of reaching higher levels are not always given tasks that make them think or work hard enough.
- In a few lessons, pupils make less progress than they should because they are not given enough time to work on their own.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always challenge pupils to reach higher standards and provide clear guidance on how this can be done.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching do not always focus sharply enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Not all staff with specific roles and responsibilities have the skills needed to play their part in monitoring and improving teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Reviews of the use of extra government funding, and subsequent action, are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The school provides a calm and nurturing learning environment in which pupils behave well and feel safe.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has risen to be above average.
- The school benefits from the support of the overwhelming majority of parents.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development very well.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons. Several lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The headteacher also joined the inspectors in reviewing pupils' written work.
- Inspectors also observed two assemblies, made a number of short visits to classrooms and observed a performance by younger pupils at a local church.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and three members of the governing body. They also met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 53 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- They looked at the school's policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Griffiths

Additional Inspector

Fiona Parr

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an above average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well-above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional government funding for particular groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the usual times of starting or leaving is well above that seen in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - pupils are given work that is challenging, particularly those capable of reaching higher levels
  - teachers pace lessons so that pupils have sufficient time to work on their own
  - marking consistently challenges untidy and poorly presented work, pupils are given guidance on how their work can be improved and teachers check that pupils' act on the advice given.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in:
  - mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to apply and develop their number skills in a wider range of contexts
  - the development of early reading and writing skills, and pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics screening check, by ensuring greater consistency in the teaching of letters and sounds.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - checks of the quality of teaching are clearly focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
  - staff with subject leadership roles are provided with the training and support they need to be able to identify and tackle weaknesses in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Because of inconsistencies in teaching and learning, pupils make good progress in some lessons but slower progress in others. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- While standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 show signs of improvement, standards in mathematics have been stubbornly well below average in past years. They have now begun to improve in Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was well below the required standard. The results of pupils entitled to pupil premium support were further below the expected standard. This is partly because of inconsistency in the teaching of phonics, which has been identified as an improvement priority by the school.
- The above-average number of pupils coming into and moving out of the school makes it challenging for the school to gain a full picture of the progress of pupils. In the results of the tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, standards in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling were below average.
- While standards in mathematics were average, in both mathematics and reading, progress was not good enough from the end of Key Stage 1. In writing, pupils made the expected progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to reach average standards.
- Lesson observations and reviews of pupils' work show that that progress is slowed because pupils are not always given tasks that are suitably challenging. The expectations of the progress pupils can make are not always consistently high enough and this, at times, impedes their rates of progress, particularly the progress of more-able pupils.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is similarly as inconsistent as that of their peers. There are signs that recent improvement in the organisation of teaching for these pupils is having a positive impact on their progress. Nevertheless, the progress of these pupils is not accelerating fast enough to quickly close the attainment gaps between these and other pupils. In 2013, they were about four terms behind their classmates in reading, almost a year behind in writing, and six months behind in mathematics.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are mostly well below those typical for their age. In the Nursery and in the Reception classes they learn steadily and most make good progress. Personal and social development is a strong area, while progress is weaker in literacy and numeracy. The skills of the majority are still below those expected when they enter Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 1 because they receive suitable support and resources are well matched to their needs. However, progress is not good enough in Key Stage 2 because work is not always pitched at the right level and is sometimes too hard for them.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because they are well supported and planned for in lessons. In 2013, they reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were above their classmates and similar pupils nationally.

- Pupils' health and well-being are enhanced by their participation in the good range of sports and other physical activities that the school offers.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching across year groups is too variable to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Where teaching requires improvement, not enough use is made of assessment information to plan work that meets the need of all learners. As a result, pupils are not always working at the right level. Some pupils find the work too easy while others find it too hard, and this impedes the rate of progress.
- Occasionally, pupils of all abilities are given the same lengthy explanations of learning when more-able pupils, in particular, are capable of moving on more quickly. When this occurs, the best use is not made of the support available from teaching assistants because pupils have too little time to work on their own.
- In a few lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults do not take enough advantage of the opportunities that arise to develop children's basic language skills through, for example, questioning.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. There are examples of good teaching enabling pupils to grasp the link between letters and sounds quickly. However, in some lessons, teaching does not provide pupils with a secure base on which to develop their reading and writing skills.
- While there are examples of pupils' work improving because of effective marking, the expectations communicated through marking are not always high enough. Some pupils' writing is marked but without comment that the work is untidy and poorly presented. Pupils are not always given enough guidance on how their work can be improved. Where such guidance is given, pupils are not always required to follow it through and so they repeat the same mistakes.
- The additional support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is sometimes less effective because the work is sometimes too hard for them. As a consequence these pupils' progress is, at times, slower than that of their classmates. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers make good use of paired and small-group work for pupils to talk with and learn from each other. This helps to promote their social as well as their speaking and listening skills. This was seen in a Year 6 English lesson, for example, where brisk progress was made in developing pupils' understanding of poetic devices because the fast pace of the lesson captured pupils' enthusiasm. Good use was made of brisk questioning to check on pupils' understanding.
- The early indications are that the refocusing of the use of pupil premium funding to supplement teaching support is having a positive impact on the progress of these pupils in English and mathematics. Some of the most effective teaching seen during the inspection occurred in the support groups which are organised to boost the progress of these pupils.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **are good**

- From the time pupils first enter school they are surrounded by an exceptionally friendly, supportive and nurturing atmosphere. Because they quickly realise that they are valued and respected as individuals, they in turn show respect for adults and other pupils. This underpins the positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour that pupils display in lessons and around the school.
- Staff, parents and carers agree that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. This is supported by school records.
- Boys and girls from different backgrounds all play together cheerfully, and in lessons they work together and share ideas enthusiastically. Their enjoyment of school is demonstrated by the improvement in attendance, which is now above average.
- Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out and have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. The school makes clear that bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and pupils are confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ability to keep their children safe and to deal with any problems quickly.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibility. Through their roles as school councillors, 'hive' leaders or 'bin busters', they develop self-confidence and make positive contributions to the school community.
- Although infrequent, there are incidences of misbehaviour. Teachers manage such behaviour well and pupils in turn respond positively to the school's system for rewarding good behaviour. This ensures that all pupils enjoy the lessons and that their learning is not affected by the isolated behaviour lapses of a few.

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the action taken to raise standards has not been effective in accelerating the progress of all groups of learners.
- Although the quality of teaching is checked through regular lesson observations the outcomes of these observations do not focus closely enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Similarly, reviews of pupils' work do not always identify if the work is suitably challenging.
- Key stage and subject leaders have well-defined areas of responsibility. Several are relatively new to subject or other leadership roles. While they are all fully committed to supporting the continuing drive for improvement, they do not, as yet, have the skills to accurately evaluate the impact of teaching on learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Teachers' performance is closely linked to their pay and targets are set in line with the national *Teachers' Standards* and priority areas of the school. The headteacher has demonstrated a willingness to take firm management action to tackle underperformance. However, in a very few instances, the targets set for teachers are too general and do not relate closely enough to measureable improvements in pupils' progress.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work together as a united team. Together they have secured the full support of parents and carers, who in turn value all that the school provides.

- Senior leaders have accurately identified areas where improvement is needed. They have tackled the areas identified for improvement from the previous inspection. As a result, attendance has improved, as have standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Effective action to measure the impact of pupil premium funding has helped the school consider how best teaching should be improved. Although this action is not yet consistent throughout the school, there are signs of pupils making better progress. Improvements such as these demonstrate the school's capacity to improve.
- The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics and is enriched by visits to places of interest and residential visits for older pupils. Through experiences such as these, assemblies, music, art and the development of pupils' understanding of different cultures, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development particularly well.
- The school has a longstanding tradition of developing pupils' self-confidence, health and well-being through sport. The additional primary sports funding is being used well to employ specialists to work alongside teachers to develop teaching skills and pupils' physical skills.
- At the heart of the school is a common determination to ensure equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination. Links with parents and carers are very strong and staff work to involve them in their children's learning, particularly those who may be hard to reach.
- The level of support provided by the local authority is matched to the needs of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The school benefits from the constructive support and variety of expertise provided by the governing body. Governors are fully committed to ensuring the school's future success. They manage funding conscientiously and ensure that statutory duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding of pupils. All necessary checks are carried out to ensure pupils' safety. Governors manage finances well and make sure that the income received through the pupil premium is spent for the purposes intended. They oversee the management of teachers' performance and know how the school's performance compares with that of other schools. They understand that teachers' pay and promotion must be justified by the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. However, governors do not have an entirely accurate view of the school's performance and some consider that pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are better than they actually are.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122539
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425108

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	380
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Stratton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9258057
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