

John Clifford Primary School

Nether Street, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2AT

Inspection dates	22–23 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teachers set challenging activities in the vast majority of classes and pupils aspire to complete the toughest, 'devilishly difficult' ones.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide effective guidance and support for staff teams in the school.
- Pupils' outcomes have improved substantially in recent years. By the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve above-average standards in reading and mathematics.
- Children in the early years settle quickly into the welcoming environment and make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception Year, a rising proportion of children achieve a good level of development.
- Pupils are extremely keen learners; they embrace responsibilities, feel resoundingly safe and play a very active role in school life. Attendance is rising and pupils rarely miss an opportunity to show how much they value and care for each other.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The curriculum offers many opportunities for pupils to develop their views and personal skills and to become highly reflective young citizens.
- Governors are an integral part of school life. They visit the school regularly and frequently seek the views of parents, staff and pupils so that they have first-hand information on how the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of pupils' handwriting is too variable across all subjects.
- Early years staff do not plan activities that make full use of the outdoor space.
- Sometimes children in the early years are over reliant on adults to support their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing in all subjects so that it is as good as in their handwriting books.
- Raise the achievement of the children in early years provision by making sure that:
 - early years staff plan for more focused activities that fully utilise the outdoor space
 - children are not over reliant on adults to select resources for them and support their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders support staff very well. Phase leaders work closely with their team members to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well. School leaders and governors communicate a clear vision to improve the school and staff know precisely what the current priorities are.
- Leaders have successfully raised the quality of teaching, which is now typically good across the school. Staff receive effective coaching and support from phase leaders and their professional skills are developed through secure performance management systems.
- The headteacher works effectively with a 'family' of schools locally and has formed a highly productive partnership with a national leader of education. This has enabled staff to share information and best practice between schools and to moderate and hone their judgements on pupils' work.
- Staff morale is high and those responding to questionnaires express their unanimously positive support for the improvements made since the previous inspection. Comments were particularly supportive of the headteacher. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This is because the headteacher has established clear lines of accountability among leaders, which in turn provides a robust monitoring system for governors to check on the school's progress.
- The school is a friendly and welcoming community where all pupils get along and are fully accepted and included. Pupils are treated equally and feel valued and respected. They in turn show their respect for each other and there is no discrimination. Pupils understand how British values relate to everyday life, and assembly themes such as homophobia provide good opportunities to discuss real-life issues and the importance of treating everybody equally. They have good knowledge and awareness of the beliefs and cultures of others living in Britain today.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils have a wide variety of creative, cultural and musical experiences through trips, visits and activities locally and further afield. The school is particularly proud of its involvement in music and pupils keenly participate in the choir and the rock choir, as well as playing many musical instruments. Pupils enhance their highly developed personal skills and become reflective young people with a keen awareness of the lives of others across the country.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn and to develop and use skills across different subjects. Topics chosen attract pupils' interest and are deliberately taught in a specific order to coincide with pupils' needs at key times in the year. High levels of interest and engagement have contributed to good progress in all subjects.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to improve their academic achievement and to boost their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils have full access to all trips and visits, non-swimmers are targeted for lessons and there are options to learn to play a musical instrument. Gaps in attainment are closing across all year groups so that these pupils make similar progress to that of others in the school and nationally. The additional funding for primary sports and physical education (PE) is used very effectively. Pupils actively participate in a wide range of sports, and specialist coaches also help to develop teachers' confidence and skills for delivering their own PE lessons.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and highly praiseworthy of how it has improved. Communications with parents are excellent and there are many well-attended workshops and sessions for parents to come into the school and hear how they can help their children to achieve their very best.
- The local authority provides good support and has encouraged partnerships with a group of schools locally. This has enhanced the skills of phase leaders and allowed leaders across schools to share their very best practice and to moderate pupils' work.
- The local authority has noted the improvements in the school since the previous inspection and now considers the support required to be at a 'light-touch' level. The school is in a strong position to make further improvements.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have reviewed their skills and produced an effective improvement plan since the previous inspection. New governors have deliberately been sought who have professional education backgrounds and this has strengthened the capacity and confidence of governors to challenge leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance.
 - Governors make regular visits to the school and Friday is known as 'governor day'. They make a point of speaking with parents, staff and pupils and use this information to add weight and accuracy to their own monitoring and checks on how the school is improving.
 - Link governors liaise with phase leaders, look at pupils' work in books and see how the quality of teaching helps pupils to learn. Governors receive regular reports on the school's progress towards achieving the goals set out in the school improvement plan. They ask challenging questions about the impact of strategies to raise standards in the school and are highly visible at school events to speak with parents and families.
 - They look closely at how performance management is used to develop and support all staff; this has helped to raise the quality of teaching in the school. They are fully supportive of the partnerships with local schools and have used these to evaluate their own work and compare it with other governing bodies.
 - Additional funds to boost the uptake of sport across the school are closely monitored. Governors see how the specialist outdoor education teacher has raised pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and prepared them well for future residential visits.
 - Governors look closely at information on how pupil premium funds are spent and notice the impact that the specialist reading teacher has on quickly raising pupils' achievements in reading. Governors monitor the cost of extra resources and the success of strategies to close the learning gaps between these pupils when compared with their classmates in the school and nationally.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have formed excellent partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. This has helped to ensure that pupils are supported and kept safe. Governors make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices and have ensured that their own training is up to date. Governors are passionate about doing all they can to help keep pupils safe and have agreed the use of resources to make improvements to security gates, fences and locking procedures. They frequently speak with pupils and ensure that they feel safe and secure in school. Governors know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching is now typically good and enables pupils to make good progress across all their subjects.
- Teachers consistently offer pupils a range of challenging tasks. As a result, pupils enjoy pushing themselves and aspire to succeed with the toughest, 'devilishly difficult' challenges. This raises pupils' belief in what they are capable of achieving and has contributed strongly to their positive enjoyment of learning.
- Teachers work closely with year-group colleagues to ensure that activities are well matched to the abilities and interests of their pupils. Teaching assistants are directed well and this ensures that pupils with additional needs are well supported. Their work is rigorously checked by the special educational needs coordinator, who makes sure that pupils with additional needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Adults have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. In every class, pupils use the 'C3B4ME' strategy, making three attempts to ask others or find an answer before asking a teacher for help. This has accelerated pupils' confidence and developed their resilience when facing learning challenges.
- Adults frequently ask probing questions so that pupils are encouraged to explain and articulate their understanding, and are highly adept in checking learning throughout the lesson. Pupils have many opportunities to talk about their work and this has raised pupils' confidence and helped to develop their language skills.

- Teachers know their pupils very well and are able to offer individual support or challenge when these are needed. The most-able pupils are directed to the most stretching tasks and expected to get them right. For example, in mathematics, the 'fun Friday challenge' provides an excellent opportunity for the most-able pupils to apply their skills in solving difficult mathematical problems. As a result, they are able to deepen their understanding and their progress accelerates.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read both in and out of school and parents frequently spend time at the start of the day in class, reading with their children. The school is committed to pupils becoming lifelong readers and provides many opportunities to read for enjoyment and pleasure. Reading questionnaires, competitions and free reading books have successfully contributed to pupils' enjoyment of reading. As a result, reading standards have risen across the school.
- Writing has been a key priority across the school and inspectors saw many examples of good-quality writing in books and display work. The whole-school drive to 'plan, draft and edit' and the celebration of good-quality writing in 'WOW' books are highly visible. However, despite this strategy, the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects is too variable.
- Pupils appreciate the value of homework set and older pupils make good use of the homework club to complete their work. Modern technologies are made available every lunchtime and pupils say that there is extra help available in school if they get stuck.
- Pupils are developing a good understanding of how to improve their work because adults offer helpful oral and written feedback in line with the school's marking policy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are exceptionally keen learners, listen attentively in class and show great respect and regard for their classmates and adults within the school. The school's motto to 'be your best, celebrate success. Together we will be successful' is an important contributor to pupils' successful personal development.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in roles such as librarians, school councillors, play leaders and door monitors. They enthusiastically celebrate the achievements of others in assembly and by taking great delight in writing a positive comment, which is attached to the photo of each 'star of the week'.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. All agree that bullying in the school is exceptionally rare and school records support this view. Pupils feel very well cared for and have several places and staff in school to go to if they feel they need help.
- Staff take the time to get to know pupils as individuals and sensitively provide the highest levels of care and support. Pupils with additional needs receive tailored support that enables them to learn and achieve well.
- Pupils are well informed about British values and see how they relate to everyday life. They gain deeper insights through well-thought-out assemblies and trips that show them how their actions and attitudes towards each other really make a difference. Year 6 pupils who had been given a pound each and asked to be enterprising and raise funds for their end-of-year event diplomatically discussed their best options and suggested that they should vote on possible choices before making the final selection.
- The school tackles issues surrounding different faiths and cultures through topic work, exploring themes and extending learning through visits to places of worship. This raises pupils' awareness of what it means to live in Britain today.
- This is a very reflective school and pupils have many opportunities to think about their own points of view and those of others. Pupils show great sensitivity when listening to their classmates and offer helpful suggestions when their advice is sought.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Attendance has risen and is average, punctuality is good and pupils arrive well prepared and ready for the day ahead.
- Pupils in all areas of the school show their impeccable manners and treat each other and staff with great courtesy, consideration and respect. Pupils show their excellent values and proudly receive certificates for demonstrating politeness, friendliness, being helpful and making everyone feel welcome.
- Pupils, staff and parents commented that pupils' behaviour is excellent. This typifies the harmonious and friendly school community where all pupils get along extremely well with each other and accept each other's differences. Those joining part-way through the year are quickly made to feel welcome and this helps them to settle and get on with their studies.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils now make good progress across the school. In 2015, Year 6 pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling tests. This was the school's best-ever result for Year 6 pupils. However, although standards in writing are rising, in 2015 they were below the national figure.
- These results have supported good progress from pupils' starting points, with many more pupils than previously reaching expected progress levels in all subjects, with particular successes in reading and in mathematics. The proportions making more than expected progress in reading and mathematics exceeded national expectations.
- In 2015, the most-able Year 6 pupils make excellent progress, exceeding national levels in reading and mathematics. Their attainment in writing was in line with the national average and above average for all other subjects at the higher level. In class, pupils are frequently directed to the more challenging work which they confidently tackle and expect to get right.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Those who need additional language support are quickly identified and specialist teaching assistants provide focused sessions to help pupils develop their reading and writing skills.
- School tracking information and pupils' current work indicate that they are making good progress. This is rising consistently across subjects and in the majority of year groups. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similarly good progress as their classmates. This is as a result of receiving effective support. Those pupils with complex needs are given laptop computers to boost their learning in school and at home.
- Pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding make good progress in most year groups. Year 6 pupils successfully narrowed the learning gaps in each subject compared with others nationally. Additional funding is used effectively to provide daily, targeted support for reading, writing and mathematics tuition, which allows pupils access to school trips and enables them to participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years and in 2015, Year 1 pupils achieved above-average results for the first time in the national phonics check.
- Pupils' achievements are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is because leaders have placed a stronger focus on raising the quality of teaching through the creation of phase teams and partnership work. Pupils are more actively involved in helping themselves to improve, and challenging work has had a positive impact on deepening their knowledge and understanding. This prepares pupils well for their move to secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years provision enter with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is rising and close to the national average. This represents good progress from their starting points, so that children are well prepared when they enter Year 1.

- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment because adults provide a good variety of well-organised and stimulating activities which help them to acquire and practise new skills. The 'challenge' areas in each classroom encourage children to extend their understanding and this helps the children to make good progress.
- Children easily pick up routines which underpin their good personal development and behaviour towards each other. Adults encourage safe play and use of resources and older children take part in Bikeability to broaden their awareness of staying safe on the roads outside school. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring and nurturing staff. This ethos encourages children to be kind to each other.
- Teaching in the early years is typically good and the phase leader keeps a close eye on how this impacts on the children's good progress. Staff plan activities that capture imagination, are appropriate for the children's ages and link to topics and current learning themes. For example, children thoroughly enjoyed listening to the story 'The very hungry caterpillar'. Following this, they painted pictures of butterflies and made fruit salad, referring to the fruits that the caterpillar had eaten. Adults regularly check how well children are developing and this enables them to direct any additional help and support if required. This has contributed well to the rise in children's achievements.
- Adults' plans show their good organisation of activities to stimulate learning within the classroom. However, this is not replicated in the planning and organisation of outdoor activities and although children enjoy learning outside, their development is less rapid. Adults generally organise resources well and set out what children need for activities. However, sometimes children are over reliant on adults to support their learning.
- Communication with parents is good. Parents frequently attend 'stay and play' sessions and spend time reading with their children. Their input to children's learning journals is growing and the school's new online assessment system is ideally placed to enhance their contribution even further.

School details

Unique reference number	122539
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10001796

This inspection 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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Bone
Headteacher	Simon Thompson
Telephone number	0115 9258057
Website	www.johncliffordschool.com
Email address	head@johnclifford.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized primary school and the number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection. Five new teachers and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2015.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore are eligible to be supported through the pupil premium funding is slightly above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well above the national average.
- The early years provision consists of one Nursery and two Reception classes.
- More pupils than is seen nationally leave and join the school at different times during the year.
- The schools meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons, one jointly with the headteacher. They observed support in and out of class for pupils who need additional help with their learning. A review of additional support in four lessons was carried out jointly with the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read aloud and attended three school assemblies.
- The inspection team looked closely at pupils' work in every class and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of each day and took note of their views through the 52 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and through the school's own parent survey carried out by governors.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school and met with two different groups: school councillors and play leaders together; and a group of pupils with additional needs.
- Staff returned 24 questionnaires during the inspection and pupils returned two. These were analysed to gain their views of the school.
- Inspectors met with three governors, a senior school adviser and had a telephone discussion with the headteacher of a primary school that is working in partnership to help the school improve. Inspectors also held discussions with school leaders responsible for English, mathematics, early years provision, assessment (phase leaders), and for coordinating special educational needs.
- Inspectors checked school documentation on attendance and behaviour and looked closely at pupils' current progress and the monitoring of safeguarding. They looked at records of governors' meetings and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector
Carolyn Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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