

Clarice Cliff Primary School

Goldenhill Road, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST4 3DP

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Though some improvements have been secured, the quality of teaching, assessment and outcomes for pupils remain variable in key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders and governors have developed their action plans since the last inspection. Nevertheless, some objectives remain too broad and do not fully respond to key issues.
- The governing body lacks some of the skills required to be able to fully interrogate assessment information. As a result, governors are not always able to sufficiently challenge leaders about the school's performance.
- Assessment systems are not yet fully embedded across the curriculum.
- Pupils' phonics skills are below those found nationally. The teaching of phonics and reading varies in quality in some parts of the school.
- Pupils' progress in writing remains too slow. Progress in writing for pupils currently on roll is improving but is not yet consistently strong.
- Some of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not always sufficiently challenged to do their best.
- Attendance rates are below national levels. Persistent absence, although showing some improvement, remains too high.

The school has the following strengths

- Staff morale is high at Clarice Cliff Primary. Leaders have fostered a strong sense of ambition and pride in their workforce.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate considerable resilience. They have managed several very challenging episodes of flooding since June of this year.
- The school has many capable leaders who are now ready to extend their responsibilities in order to bring about school improvement.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare has been a key focus area for development. Leaders have successfully ensured that the vast majority of pupils' welfare needs are met and that they are kept safe in school.
- The early years provision is a strength of the school. Children get a very good start to their learning journey and make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct has improved since the last inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - improvement plans are developed further so that the school's key development areas are addressed in full
 - development plans detail the precise improvements leaders will expect to see as a result of staff training and monitoring activities
 - leaders at all levels are supported to extend their responsibilities in order to assist school improvement
 - the role of governors is developed further so that they have a better understanding of outcomes across the school
 - work continues to improve rates of attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers and teaching assistants have further opportunities to share the best practice within the school
 - new assessment procedures are embedded and staff are provided with training in the use of the new systems
 - the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are sufficiently challenged and make rates of progress that allow them to attain at a higher level.
- Improve standards in English by making sure that:
 - plans for improving writing continue to provide opportunities for staff and leaders to check and agree on the assessments that they make throughout the year
 - the teaching of phonics is of a consistently high quality and the best practice is shared widely
 - the approach to the teaching of reading has greater structure.

A review of governance is recommended in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have developed the quality of provision since the last inspection. In some areas, this has resulted in better rates of progress and outcomes for pupils. In addition, staff morale and ambition for the pupils they teach have lifted. Even so, improvements in teaching and learning are not yet consistent or sustained across the school.
- Leaders have identified the need to further improve teaching and outcomes. Development plans include actions to achieve improvements but, currently, these are too broad. This lack of precision makes it difficult for governors to articulate the school's exact priorities or gauge the full extent of any improvements.
- Plans for raising standards in English, for example, identify how leaders will check and monitor improvements, but it is not always clear how staff will be trained and supported to secure better outcomes for pupils.
- The school's plans have not yet secured teaching that is consistently strong across the school. Rates of progress still vary too much in key stage 1 and parts of key stage 2. In addition, leaders still have more work to do with families in order to continue to improve attendance rates.
- Leaders and governors have worked hard to overcome the challenges of recent flood damage. The headteacher has liaised with many agencies and contractors to remedy damage and minimise disruption. Some parents have raised concerns about the learning time that has been lost but have also commended the positive and professional response of staff.
- The school has recruited several new staff and the developing skills and ambition of the leadership team are impressive. The school now has many capable leaders who are ready to build on and extend their current responsibilities.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to evaluate the quality of teaching. Leaders use these evaluations and information from pupil progress meetings to agree performance management targets with teachers. These targets are clear and identify the individual priorities for teachers. Teachers say that they value the training that the school offers. Nevertheless, the overall quality of teaching requires further improvement and some teachers are unsure about the exact steps they should take next in order to improve their practice.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally are promoted across the curriculum and in assemblies. Pupils can describe the school's values well, which they say include being kind, helpful, gentle and working hard. Pupils recognise the importance of such values and understand how hard work and compassion will help them now and in their future lives. However, when inspectors spoke to pupils about British values they were not able to show a strong understanding of areas such as democracy or tolerance.
- The curriculum is well organised. Plans detail the topic areas that pupils will cover and these can be followed through to work in books. In Year 6, pupils learn about evolution, the Vikings and the Maya civilisation. Year 6 books from the last academic

year show progression through a wide range of curriculum areas.

- Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. During the inspection, pupils from Years 5 and 6 attended a cross-country running event. On Friday afternoons, the school has devised 'golden time' to recognise and reward good conduct. The school is committed to this time having an educational focus and pupils have recently made kites, marshmallow catapults, rockets and volcanoes.
- Pupil premium funding is used with increasing effectiveness to support disadvantaged pupils. The appointment of a home-school link worker and learning mentor has enhanced the school's ability to meet the welfare needs of many pupils. However, leaders are aware that there are still some differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is tracked carefully by leaders. The analysis of progress is used to devise new actions. These actions often result in pupils attending additional learning activities which help to boost their progress. The school's own assessment information shows that differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils currently on roll and their peers have diminished in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, rates of expected progress for disadvantaged pupils compared favourably to those of other pupils nationally. Nevertheless, some of the brightest pupils are not yet making more rapid rates of progress.
- The school sport and physical education (PE) funding has been used to provide additional staff training and extend the extra-curricular clubs available to pupils. As a result of staff working alongside qualified sports coaches, the teaching of PE has improved. Improvements have been verified by external advisers. In addition, the numbers of pupils attending a club or participating in sports events have almost doubled in the last year.
- Staff are united in their ambition to provide a safe and caring school for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding pupils. They understand the requirements of the latest legislation and are aware of the training that has been provided to staff.
- The chair of governors is aware that governors lack some key skills as a result of recent changes to the governing body membership. The school are keen to recruit new members and recognise that this will allow them to offer a greater level of challenge to the school's leaders.
- Although governors are committed and visit the school regularly, they are not precise about the priorities for school improvement and lack the necessary skills to analyse data in depth.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know pupils very well and training is planned carefully to ensure that staff are aware of any updates to national guidance or risks in the local area.
- Record-keeping is of a very high quality. Leaders diligently record concerns and take appropriate action in line with their policies and procedures.

- Teachers are able to talk with confidence about the actions they take if they have any concerns about their pupils. They take great pride in the systems the school uses and say they value the time that is dedicated to transition. For example, at the end of each year, time is allocated for teachers to share key information about the pupils in their care. Teachers complete a checklist to confirm that this has been done and say that this helps them respond well to the welfare and other needs of pupils as they move through the school.
- Leaders ensure that they attend regular meetings with social care to review the safety of children and their families. Any actions that the school takes are carefully documented and reviewed.
- The school has also developed the curriculum so that older pupils can learn about safe relationships. Workshops with local agencies called 'Relationships without fear' help pupils understand what to do if they ever feel they are in danger. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were observed discussing the dangers of alcohol and the impact it can have on different people. Pupils shared thoughts and ideas in a mature and responsible way.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, but it is not yet good overall.
- Teachers' expectations of what some pupils will achieve vary between different classes. Opportunities to assess understanding or provide additional questioning are sometimes missed and this can lead to work that is not well matched to pupils' needs. During the inspection, inspectors saw examples of lower-ability and most able pupils not being challenged. Pupils are not always moved on quickly enough when they are clearly ready for new work or the next step.
- In some parts of the school, the approach to the teaching of reading, including the teaching of phonics, lacks structure. The strategies used by staff to foster a love of reading and promote independent reading vary. As a result, rates of progress fluctuate and outcomes in key stage 1 remain below those found nationally.
- Pupils' progress in writing, while improving, is still not good enough given pupils' starting points. Due to changes in assessment procedures, staff are not fully secure in the judgements they make when checking pupils' writing.
- The impact of teaching assistants' work has been an area for improvement within the school's development plans. Inspectors saw some teaching assistants having a strong impact on learning. In these observations, staff were supporting pupils to be fully engaged or asking additional questions to prompt thinking. Where teaching assistant support is not as strong, staff can be too quick to offer help to pupils when they are asked questions by teachers. This support can stifle some pupils' attempts to construct their own answer and learn independently.
- Teaching is having more impact on learning in the early years and in key stage 2. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to share the best practice more widely.
- Assessment systems have been developed to reflect the expectations set out in the new national curriculum. Leaders have monitored the effectiveness of the procedures

they introduced last year and have decided to move to a new system this September. The local authority is working with the school to establish these new tracking and assessment procedures. Leaders have planned additional training sessions to support staff in reaching judgements, particularly in writing. Training plans also detail opportunities for teachers to moderate one another's assessments.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils at Clarice Cliff Primary show tremendous confidence. Pupils are very inquisitive and the inspection team were inundated with questions and requests to share learning during the inspection.
- Leaders and governors understand pupils' needs well and recruit staff accordingly. The special educational needs coordinator, home-school link worker and learning mentor play important roles within the school. They are well known to pupils and families and carefully monitor the safety and well-being of the school population.
- Pupils told inspectors that they know how to stay safe. Pupils described the button that they can press on computer screens if they do not like something that they see online.
- Pupils that inspectors spoke with say that behaviour is good at their school and that it has improved a lot in recent times. Pupils report that teachers respond well to their concerns, including any they may raise about bullying.
- Pupils believe that they are good at helping one another 'fit in' at school. One boy told inspectors, 'I used to not join in with other children playing; children saw this and encouraged me to play with them and I became more confident'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct has improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have devised a range of new systems to help pupils make the right choices. Systems include tracking grids and clear rewards and sanctions. Information provided by the school shows that incidents of poor behaviour have halved over the last year.
- The pupils that inspectors spoke to unanimously believe behaviour has improved. They are proud of their school. Some pupils in Year 6 wear enamel shield badges with pride and are keen to explain their extra responsibilities. Pupils also explained how they had been picked for their new responsibilities in their final year at Clarice Cliff; a process that included submitting application forms to the headteacher.
- Despite the challenges brought by recent and extensive flood damage, the school environment is bright and attractive. Corridors are clean and tidy and wall displays celebrate pupils' achievements and work.
- Some parents, in their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, raised concerns about behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised school records and talked to leaders about the actions they have taken to improve behaviour over the last two years. No disruptive behaviour was observed during the inspection.
- Attendance levels remain below national levels. However, the school presented information and analysis which demonstrated the extent to which leaders have

improved attendance in the last academic year. Strategies for encouraging attendance are beginning to work and leaders and governors are aware that this must continue.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils across the school are variable. Children in the early years make strong rates of progress from their starting points. Taking into account the school's own assessment information and work in books, progress across key stages 1 and 2 is not yet consistently strong.
- In the early years, attainment has risen over the last three years. Rigorous assessment procedures and good teaching result in strong outcomes.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' scores did not improve in 2016. In 2016, 57% of pupils reached the expected standard, compared to 68% the previous year.
- By the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment remains below national levels. The school's own assessment information shows that rates of progress in key stage 1 are improving, but remain variable.
- In key stage 2, pupils were beginning to perform close to the level of other pupils nationally in 2015. New assessment arrangements were introduced in 2016, so it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the most recent data and that of previous years. However, it is clear that standards remain below average, with the slowest progress being seen in writing.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not attain as well as other pupils nationally at a higher level.
- School assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 and 2 made similar rates of progress compared to their peers in the 2015–16 academic year. This is the result of increasingly effective support for these pupils. Children who are looked after are also provided with effective support. Leaders and teachers understand their needs and devise action plans to help them make progress. Personal education plans are reviewed regularly and additional funding is used to help these children achieve their individual targets.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not have the same rates of progress as other pupils in reading and writing last year. Their progress rates were stronger in mathematics. The school is aware of these differences and has already taken action to adapt provision. The school is able to demonstrate pockets of rapid progress for some pupils following their participation in recent support programmes.
- Work in pupils' books shows that rates of progress improved rapidly from January 2015 for some year groups. The school believes that this is a result of changes that were made to provision. Current work indicates that this continues to be the case, with an increasing number of pupils making the progress expected of them. Even so, there is still more to do to make sure all pupils make the progress that they should.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is a strength of the school. Staff know children exceptionally well. The starting points of children in the early years are below those typical for their age.
- Teaching in the early years is effective. Assessment procedures and teachers' planning are well developed to ensure that individual needs are met and children make rapid progress. Children's progress is carefully monitored and a higher proportion of children secured a good level of development in 2016 compared to previous years.
- Learning is creative and highly engaging. In the Reception Year, during this inspection, children were learning to be 'young explorers'. In physical education, they were encouraged to navigate a pirate ship. Children were split into two groups and were invited to run to the bow or stern. The 'young explorers' theme continued through to writing, where children were excited to show inspectors messages in bottle that they had written. One girl had written a message for her mother; her letter formation and use of phonics skills to spell out words were strong.
- By the end of the Reception Year, children are ready to transfer into Year 1. The school has appointed a leader to oversee this transition.
- The early years pupil premium is used to provide additional speech therapist support. This support also enhances children's reading skills and builds their confidence.
- Early years staff visit children in other settings and in their homes before they start their learning journey in Nursery. Engaging parents and involving them in their children's learning is a high priority. Workshops, put on by the school, are well attended and the school's 'Growing Together' project has resulted in strong levels of progress for children from those families that took part.
- There are no breaches in statutory welfare requirements. Children behave well, feel safe and enjoy school.

School details

Unique reference number	124008
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10009261

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Williams
Headteacher	Diane Broadhurst
Telephone number	01782 881 480
Website	www.claricecliffprimary.co.uk
Email address	dbroadhurst@sgfl.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2014

Information about this school

- Clarice Cliff is larger than the average primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils – those who are supported by the pupil premium funding – is well above average.
- The majority of pupils on roll are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6.
- Since the last inspection, the school has experienced several episodes of flooding. As a result, some parts of the playground and the school library are not in use.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities without a statement or an education, health and care plan is below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement or an education, health and care plan is average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with members of the leadership team.
- The lead inspector met with a member of the school's administration team to review the single central record and a sample of personnel files. He also met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher to review child protection procedures, including: the organisation of child protection files, certificates of training, and a range of risk assessments.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with leaders and also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct throughout the day, including during lesson times, breaktimes and at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessment information, school policies, development plans and the school's self-evaluation plan.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and met with parents at the end of the school day. They also looked at 34 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 18 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Stone	Ofsted Inspector
Benetia Mounsey	Ofsted Inspector

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