

Inspection of Clifton Community School

Middle Lane, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S65 2SN

Inspection dates: 4–5 December 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say that they feel safe at this school. They are confident that staff will help them, whatever their worries. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Leaders and teachers have a real passion for doing their best for pupils.

Teachers and leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Sometimes however, pupils do not fully understand the key words that teachers use. This can limit their learning. Pupils say that work is sometimes too easy for them, especially in science.

Pupils say that behaviour is continuing to improve rapidly. They say that the policies to manage behaviour are clear. Teachers will warn you, move you and then remove you from the lesson if you disrupt others' learning. This helps lesson time to be calm.

Pupils say that when bullying happens in school leaders listen and they sort bullying out quickly.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Leaders are improving the curriculum. They are changing things this year, ready for a full launch in September 2020. Pupils will have more opportunities to study English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects to GCSE.

Pupils are proud to be part of the school and talk very positively about the 'Clifton way'. They are positive about the 'Clifton pledge'. They value the experiences and opportunities that are available to them.

Most pupils at this school make good progress. However, they do not attain as highly as their peers nationally. Leaders are working on this through curriculum improvement.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have recently reviewed the quality of the curriculum. This is because after stabilising the school, leaders are now in a position to improve the curriculum offer. The review is resulting in a curriculum that is better sequenced. This is supporting pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn more. Curriculum plans show that leaders have considered how to sequence pupils' learning over time. This is so they can build on their prior learning. Pupils talk confidently about their learning in subjects such as English and Spanish. They are not as confident about their learning in science.

In the past, pupils have had a two-year key stage 3. Following the recent curriculum review, leaders are changing this to a three-year key stage 3. This is happening now in most subjects. It is planned for all subjects in September 2020. This is to allow pupils to experience the broadest curriculum before they choose their options in Year 9. The

recent curriculum review also enables more pupils to opt for languages and humanities subjects to enable them to study the Ebacc.

When pupils arrive at the school with weak literacy or numeracy skills, there is a lot of extra help to support pupils to catch up. This help includes reading programmes in key stage 3. This helps pupils to catch up and keep up. Pupils who arrive at the school speaking little English are successfully supported to develop their language quickly.

In lessons, teachers present the subject clearly. This helps pupils to understand what they need to do. Teachers assess what pupils know and can do. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The headteacher endeavours to always appoint subject specialists. The few staff who are not specialists in their subject are well supported to develop their subject knowledge.

Pupils have access to a huge range of quality activities. This supports their personal development. For example, the 'Clifton pledge' guarantees pupils a variety of experiences. These include opportunities for leadership and volunteering. Pupils also take part in school trips and work experience. The well-planned personal, social, health and economic education programme ensures that pupils learn about life in Britain and how to face and manage risk.

Pupils say that when they are in class they can learn. This is because most teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils say that behaviour has improved over time. There are still too many incidents of fixed-term exclusions and removal from classrooms. This is rapidly improving, following the introduction of a new system. However, leaders do not analyse the information about this well enough to inform their next steps.

Pupils' attendance is improving year on year. This includes pupils with SEND. Despite these improvements, pupils' attendance remains below the national average. Leaders have a range of strategies in place to continue to improve attendance.

Parents say that the school is well led and managed. They are very positive about the headteacher and the leadership team. Staff have the same view of leadership and say that leaders consider their workload. They say that if they had an issue with workload, they would be happy to seek support from leaders.

School leaders have been well supported by the trust. This includes staff and leadership development. The chief executive officer (CEO) works closely with the headteacher. This helps leaders to share good practice from Clifton Community School across the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding in this school is of a very high quality. Safeguarding leads know pupils well. They ensure that when a pupil needs help and support they receive it. This could be external support from a wide range of agencies. It could be internal support, in response to listening to pupils. For example, mental health support and anti-bullying ambassadors.

Records are meticulous. Staff know to report any concerns and abide by the motto, 'be curious'. They understand that even the smallest worry can form part of a much bigger picture. This helps keep pupils safe. Staff training about safeguarding is regular. Leaders keep staff up to date through 'data shots' and staff briefings. Leaders also ensure that all checks on adults who work with children are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not fully analyse and evaluate the school information they have available to them. This means that they do not use it as strategically as they could to inform what they do. For example, leaders do not effectively analyse behaviour information. Leaders should ensure that they use all available information available to them to inform action planning and to continue to develop the school.
- In science, the curriculum is not as well sequenced as in other subjects and pupils say that the work is not demanding. Sometimes, teachers use vocabulary that pupils do not fully understand. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in science is planned as well as in other subjects so that pupils' needs are met, and pupils learn more.
- Pupils' attendance is improving but overall attendance and persistent absence need to improve further. A small number of pupils do not behave as well as they might. Internal and fixed-term exclusions are reducing over time, but remain too high. This means that pupils miss out on valuable learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils' attendance and behaviour continue to improve by evaluating the success of the actions they are taking to make these improvements.
- Leaders have recognised that too few pupils have the opportunity to study a full suite of EBacc qualifications. The teaching of languages is much improved and pupils are now more interested in studying a language. Leaders should ensure that their plans to increase the number of pupils studying EBacc qualifications are fully implemented.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143545
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10118532
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	800
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Calvert
Headteacher	Tony Hardcastle
Website	https://www.cliftonschoool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Clifton Community School converted to become an academy in December 2017 and joined Wickersley Partnership Trust. When its predecessor school, Clifton Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require special measures.
- The school uses two providers of alternative education. These are Rotherham College and Swinton Lock.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident that occurred since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We spoke with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders. We met with pupils, formally and informally, visited lessons with senior leaders and looked

at pupils' work. Meetings were held with governors and the CEO of the trust.

- To evaluate the quality of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with pupils and staff. A meeting was held with safeguarding leads and pastoral staff. Paperwork associated with safeguarding was reviewed and discussions centred around how the school keeps pupils safe. The single central record was checked.
- We selected five subjects to look at closely during this inspection. These were English, science, Spanish, design and technology, and history. We sampled other subjects by visiting lessons, talking to curriculum leaders and looking at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Debbie Redshaw, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector

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