

Inspection of Clarkson Infants School

Trafford Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 2ES

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Clarkson Infants is a friendly and happy school. Pupils enjoy their learning and spending time with their friends. They say that learning is fun. Pupils talk happily about the things they have done and learned about.

Pupils love their teachers, who help them to feel safe. Pupils behave well in their classrooms, in the playground and as they move about the school. Pupils say that there is no bullying at their school because 'teachers wouldn't let people do that'.

Posters showing the school's 'behaviour animals' are displayed around the building. These are not a gimmick but something that is hugely valued by pupils. They work very hard to earn a sticker showing that they have been a respectful elephant, a team worker bee, a persistent tortoise, an independent cat or an aim high giraffe. Pupils wear their stickers with pride and enjoy showing them off to people.

Leaders are determined that pupils will do as well as they possibly can. They have made sure that pupils now make better progress than they did before. Most pupils are ready for the demands of junior school by the time they leave Clarkson Infants at the end of Year 2.

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

The school has been through some challenging times over the last few years. By spring 2019, the local authority was sufficiently concerned about the school to put an intervention group in place. This group was made up of senior advisers in the local authority and was set up to quickly bring about improvement in the school.

The school has improved rapidly since then, particularly since the headteacher joined the school in January 2020. Despite the challenges of managing the COVID-19 pandemic, the school's improvement journey has steadily continued.

Leaders have ensured that a suitable curriculum is in place for pupils. In each subject, from the early years onwards, leaders have thought carefully about what is most important for pupils to learn about. They have considered when the different aspects of each subject should be taught so that pupils learn things in a sensible order.

Pupils are now learning the curriculum well. Staff make sure they give pupils suitable work to do to help them practise and remember what they are taught. Pupils are making strong progress. Staff focus on developing pupils' speech and language skills. They routinely teach pupils new words and help them to remember and use them.

Some pupils do not attain as well as they should. Many children join the school with skills and abilities that are well below what is typical for their age. The pandemic has

also been enormously disruptive to pupils' early learning journeys. Although they are now catching up well, some pupils remain behind where they should be.

Early reading is increasingly strong. Leaders have ensured that a well-sequenced systematic synthetic phonics programme is in place throughout the school. Staff have strong subject knowledge and they deliver the programme very well. This means that pupils are given very clear and accurate instructions. They are given lots of opportunities to practise their phonics out loud. As a result, they remember the sounds that they are taught and blend them together well to read words.

Assessment is used effectively. For example, in mathematics, a well-thought-out approach to assessment helps teachers to make sure that the curriculum is taught well. In phonics, the results of assessments are used to decide which group each pupil should be in. Groups are changed regularly, according to need. This means that teaching is well matched to pupils' needs.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is also effective. Leaders know pupils and their individual needs very well. They make sure that pupils are given the right help, at the right time, so that they do well at school.

Pupils behave well in their classrooms and this helps them to learn. Classrooms are calm places where pupils can concentrate. A small group of pupils do not attend well. This means that they miss out on learning and spending time with their friends.

Pupils' personal development is encouraged in a number of ways. There is a strong focus on developing healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating. Pupils are taught to value and celebrate the differences between people. Pupils are offered a range of clubs, including gymnastics, archery and cookery. They go on visits to places of interest such as to the seaside and the local church.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They know pupils and their families very well. They are vigilant and alert to the possibility of abuse or neglect. Staff notice the small changes, such as in pupils' behaviour, that could indicate that something is wrong. They report their concerns promptly using the school's procedures. The designated safeguarding leads are knowledgeable and well trained. They are determined to protect the pupils in their care, taking timely action to do so when necessary. The school has a robust approach to the safer recruitment of staff. The single central record of pre-appointment checks meets requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- As a result of the pandemic, and because of their very low starting points, some pupils' attainment is lower than it should be, particularly in writing. Leaders should take action to ensure that delivery of the curriculum is highly effective, throughout the school and in all subjects, so that pupils catch up by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2.
- A small group of pupils are persistently absent from school. This means that they miss parts of the curriculum being delivered and do not get enough opportunities to practise what they are taught. Leaders should continue to find ways to reduce the absence of those pupils who most frequently miss school.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	110649
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10212382
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Pallett
Headteacher	Julie Kane
Website	www.clarksonschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The previous headteacher left the school in August 2019. An interim headteacher led the school for the autumn term 2019. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2020.
- The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2020, and the special educational needs coordinator joined in April 2021.
- In response to their concerns about the overall effectiveness of the school, the local authority put an intervention group in place in early 2019. The group was no longer felt to be necessary, and was thus disbanded, in September 2021.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with: the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and other leaders; the family support worker; a representative of the local authority; groups of pupils and staff; a group of governors; and parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work,
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' writing, listened to pupils reading, scrutinised a range of school documents, and observed pupils as they played and at lunchtime.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at records of child protection concerns, and spoke with parents, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors took into account 32 responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey and 21 responses to the staff's survey. Inspectors also noted the 36 responses to Ofsted Parent View and the same number of free-text comments made by parents.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

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