

Inspection of a good school: Cliffedale Primary School

Northcliffe Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 8DP

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has recently undergone a period of change. Arrangements for leading the school are in transition. However, pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe and well supported by their teachers. They enjoy the range of clubs, including competitive sporting activities. They appreciate the work of the children's council, including various fundraising activities. Pupils enjoy the challenge of working towards the '50 things to do before you leave Cliffedale school'.

Most staff demonstrate high expectations for pupils to achieve their best. The curriculum is designed to promote 'resilience, independence, curiosity and achievement'. Pupils enjoy learning the full range of national curriculum subjects. They say that teachers help them to develop their understanding of mathematics. They also talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They benefit from opportunities to cooperate and work in teams. Pupils do not have concerns about bullying and say that staff deal with any incidents well. Pupils feel safe in school and understand who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

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

The mathematics curriculum is closely mapped to the demands of the national curriculum. It is coherent and contains a clear set of steps to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and design activities which develop pupils' reasoning skills.

Children in the early years benefit from effective phonics teaching. As a result, children develop confidence in recognising sounds and learn to blend. In key stage 1, phonics

sessions are not as effective. Pupils who struggle with reading do not always get the support they need to catch up quickly. These pupils do not quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers. The books that pupils read do not always match the sounds that they know. However, in class reading sessions pupils enjoy a range of high-quality texts. Books are highly visible around school. The love of reading is promoted through shared story times and other whole-school events, including World Book Day.

There is some inconsistency in the teaching of other subjects. In some lessons, teachers provide activities which help pupils to know more and remember more of the intended learning. In these lessons, pupils are confident in describing their learning. In history and geography, leaders have not designed a curriculum that enables pupils to build sufficient knowledge and skills. Pupils do not always recall key information and say that learning activities are often easy. However, in other subjects, such as art and design, leaders have sequenced a rich range of opportunities for pupils to develop their art skills in relation to significant artists. There is a range of high-quality artwork around the school, including paintings and drawings developed in response to shared texts.

Leaders know the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They identify their needs swiftly. Where appropriate, pupils benefit from access to external professionals, including speech and language and disability support. However, individual education plans are variable in quality. Targets are not always precise and measurable. As a result, pupils with SEND are not always well supported by teaching that is adapted to meet their needs.

Leaders ensure that pupils are able to reflect on key issues of a spiritual, moral, social, and cultural nature. The assembly programme is wide-ranging. Pupils enjoy hearing from visitors and representatives from the community, including a local farmer. The atmosphere around school is calm and lessons are not disturbed by low-level disruption because pupils are attentive.

Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload. However, staff told the inspector that they are concerned about the impact of the recent changes of leadership on the stability of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to identify the signs of potential neglect, abuse or exploitation. They understand how to report and refer any concerns. Annual training includes coverage of issues of local concern and of the dangers of radicalisation. Leaders work with local agencies to identify appropriate next steps for pupils who need additional help. Record-keeping is detailed and includes evidence of swift communications with external professionals.

Pupils learn about healthy relationships and staying safe online. They understand about the important concepts of equality and diversity. Pupils are proud of their tolerant and welcoming school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders who are new do not have a clear understanding of fulfilling their role. This prevents them from being able to provide the support and guidance that is required in order to ensure that the curriculum is fully effective. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders benefit from appropriate guidance to ensure that the curriculum is delivered as intended.
- The support from adults for pupils who need help with reading is inconsistent. Books that pupils take home to read do not always match the sounds they know. This means that some pupils are not becoming fluent readers as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that books pupils read match the sounds they know. They should also ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to provide effective support so that pupils quickly become fluent and accurate readers.
- Pupils with SEND do not always receive a curriculum that is well matched to their needs. Targets set for these pupils are often too broad and not measurable. This does not help these pupils to learn enough of the curriculum that is at the right level or stage of development. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the knowledge and expertise to adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of pupils with SEND.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified and mapped out the precise sequence of knowledge that pupils should learn and remember. Consequently, pupils are not building on previous knowledge that will enable them to know more and remember more over time. Leaders need to make sure that the essential knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in each subject is clear and carefully set out.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

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	120393
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10227927
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nick Farrington
Acting headteacher	Kirsty Graham
Website	www.cliffedale.org
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has recently appointed a new headteacher.
- The school does not currently work with any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders to discuss a range of aspects of the school's provision, including the wider curriculum.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector also spoke to the leaders of art and design and considered examples of pupils' work.

- The inspector considered records of safeguarding practice. The inspector checked the single central record to ensure that there is good practice in safer recruitment.
- The inspector also met a group of staff to consider their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with the chair of governors to discuss the work of the governing body.
- The inspector considered the online surveys completed by staff, pupils, parents and carers.
- The inspector observed behaviour around school and spoke with pupils about their school.

Inspection team

Emma Hollis-Brown, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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