

# Inspection of a good school: Clifton Primary School

Clifton, Clifton Primary School, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2EG

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Inspection date: 1 March 2023

## Outcome

Clifton Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of the school family. They are respectful, friendly and take good care of one another.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know this and behave very well. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Leaders deal with bullying effectively. This helps pupils feel safe and happy to learn.

Pupils are kind and tolerant. A typical comment from pupils was: 'Everyone is welcome in our school'.

Pupils participate in a range of interesting and adventurous trips and visits, for example to centres for outdoor learning and to local museums. They take part in a wide range of sports, proudly representing their school in local events and competitions. This helps them to build character and develop self-confidence.

Pupils know that teachers expect them to work hard. Leaders make sure that pupils who find learning difficult, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive effective support. Most pupils achieve well.

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

Leaders have revised the curriculum. They have ensured that it is ambitious for all pupils and have organised it carefully to support pupils' learning in mixed-age classes. As a result of these changes, pupils are developing an increasingly secure body of subject knowledge. They are well prepared for the next stage in education.

Staff have only recently put the revised curriculum into place and it is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, in a few subjects, pupils do not have sufficient depth in their learning. This is because some of the tasks they are set do not

make them think hard enough. Additionally, too many older pupils make errors in basic spelling and punctuation. Teachers do not routinely pick up on this. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same mistakes.

From their first days in the early years, children develop their reading and number skills well. Leaders and teachers have ensured that reading has a high priority in the school. In the early years and key stage 1, they build pupils' phonic skills skilfully. They make sure that pupils read books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Teachers are swift to spot any pupils who may be falling behind. Staff help these pupils to catch up quickly. Once pupils are confident in phonics, they move on quickly to read and understand more complex texts. Teachers read to pupils every day. They encourage pupils to read for pleasure from a range of high-quality texts.

Teachers know what pupils need to learn at each stage in school. They check carefully that pupils are learning and remembering the curriculum content using quick quizzes as well as more formal tests.

Leaders are determined that pupils with SEND will achieve just as well as their peers. Leaders and teachers accurately identify pupils with SEND at the earliest possible stage. They ensure that the right support is in place for these pupils to do well. Consequently, pupils with SEND are confident in approaching the next phase in their education.

Teachers make the most of opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors. For example, in the adjoining 'secret garden', pupils learn about forest crafts and enjoy building campfires. They participate in local sporting and cultural events such as football tournaments and a countywide 'U Dance' performance. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very much looking forward to their forthcoming visit to London. These rich opportunities help them to learn about the wider world and prepare them well for the future.

Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They understand the importance of developing respectful relationships with people who may be different from them. Older pupils help look after children in the early years at breaks and lunchtimes. They look out for them on the yard, swiftly running to help if one of them falls over. This means that these children soon become part of the school family and learn the routines.

Pupils behave well and rarely disrupt learning. They enjoy lessons and want to do their best. They said that teachers are kind and fair. Parents and carers said that teachers are approachable and willing to listen, typically commenting that 'all staff have the children's best interests at heart'.

Governors are well informed. They make careful checks on safeguarding procedures to assure themselves that the school is safe. Governors and leaders consider staff's workload, well-being and work-life balance when making decisions about the school. Staff feel valued and appreciated.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that staff have training to help them to identify safeguarding issues. Staff know pupils well and are aware of signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. Leaders have a clear system for staff to report any concerns that they may have. Leaders follow these up diligently and take appropriate and swift action. Leaders work with other agencies to secure help for vulnerable pupils and their families.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about how to manage risk. For example, they learn about how to be safe online. Pupils said that they know that they are safe in school because staff are always watching out for them.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not set tasks and activities that challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils' learning in these subjects lacks depth. Leaders should ensure that work set for pupils is at the right level to help them develop higher level thinking skills in addition to subject specific knowledge.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make too many errors in their basic spelling and punctuation. Teachers do not routinely address this. Leaders should ensure that teachers support pupils in correcting and editing their work.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112178
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256127
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	74
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alex Lattin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Page
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.clifton.cumbria.sch.uk">www.clifton.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, the inspectors met with the executive headteacher, heads of school, subject leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and spoke to pupils informally.
- The inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of checks on staff suitability to work with pupils. They met with the designated safeguarding leader and checked how leaders record and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Cleo Cunningham

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