

# Inspection of North Clifton Primary School

Church Lane, North Clifton, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 7AP

---

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

---

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils like attending this happy, friendly school. Being part of such a close-knit community makes pupils feel safe and secure. They say, 'We are like a family – it feels nice knowing everyone, and them knowing you.' Parents and carers are very positive about the school. They appreciate the nurturing environment provided at North Clifton.

Staff know every pupil really well and they want nothing but the best for them. However, pupils do not receive a high-quality education across the curriculum. This leaves pupils without the knowledge and skills they need in some subjects.

Pupils learn about the '3Rs' at North Clifton. These are respect, resilience, and responsibility. Pupils have a deep understanding of these values. They try hard to demonstrate them. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and on the playground.

Pupils enjoy spending time in the school's secret garden. It is a special, hidden wonder where pupils get to care for the rural environment and learn about nature and the seasons. Pupils are proud of the trees they have planted, especially the sapling near the pond that will one day grow into a mighty oak like the emblem on their school badge.

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

Reading is high on the agenda at North Clifton. Pupils learn to read accurately and fluently from a young age. Staff teach the school's phonics programme well. They demonstrate how to say letter sounds and blend them together into whole words so that pupils learn how to do it. Staff check closely on pupils' progress in reading lessons. If any pupil needs extra help, they get it straight away. Pupils in the early stages of learning to read take home books that are matched to the letter sounds they know. Older pupils confidently use different 'reading lenses' to delve deeper into texts and find hidden meanings.

However, not all subjects are as strong as reading. Some parts of the school's curriculum are not well planned and sequenced. It is unclear from some subject plans what pupils should be learning and when. The school has not ensured that learning in mixed-age classes always enables pupils to make progress. Occasionally, tasks are not ambitious enough for older pupils. On the other hand, younger pupils are sometimes unprepared for the work they are given. In addition, staff do not routinely revisit prior learning in all subjects to help pupils retain important knowledge. These issues combine to leave pupils without a sufficiently detailed understanding in some subjects.

Although there are very few pupils at the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the school has suitable systems in place to provide support for pupils who require additional help.

The school has high expectations of behaviour, which pupils meet. Classrooms are calm places where pupils can focus on their learning. Pupils have high rates of attendance.

The curriculum for personal development at North Clifton is a real strength. The school has planned this in a methodical way. All aspects of pupils' personal development are linked to the school's '3R' values. The school has carefully selected the books that pupils will read so they can learn about the world beyond their window, embrace difference and champion equality. The school arranges many opportunities to enrich pupils' learning and broaden their horizons. For instance, pupils know lots about the Islamic faith following a recent trip to a local mosque.

Staff feel well supported. They enjoy working at North Clifton. They pull together to share all the things they need to do in a small school.

Leaders have identified the school's strengths and they have planned how to address the areas in need of improvement. The governing body has worked hard to put the school on a stable footing. However, governors know they need to widen their checks to ensure that pupils benefit from high-quality education in all subjects.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, it is not clear what pupils need to know and when they need to know it. This means that pupils cannot systematically build their knowledge and skills over time in all areas of the curriculum. The school must ensure that there is a precise order of learning in all subjects, setting out exactly what pupils will learn in small, sequential steps. The school must ensure that leaders check carefully the quality of education across the curriculum.
- Sometimes, expectations of pupils are too low, and they are given work they can already do. On other occasions, the work is too hard because pupils have not been taught the prior knowledge they need. The school must ensure that staff know how to meet the needs of learners in mixed-age classes so that pupils are moved on to new content at the right time.
- The school does not ensure that pupils go back over the key knowledge they have already been taught in all areas of the curriculum. Where this is the case, pupils do not remember what they have learned before in sufficient detail. The school must ensure that pupils systematically revisit important content, helping them to recall it securely so they can use it again.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	122662
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire County Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	10298446
<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>	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Karen Grundy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ilona Sanderson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northcliftonschoo.co.uk">www.northcliftonschoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up her role in September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and physical education (PE). For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also discussed the curriculums for design and technology, geography, and history.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff, including a teacher in the early stages of their teaching career. Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour, and personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and governance.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Shaun Carter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anna Coney

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023