



Office for Standards  
in Education

# Clarendon Cottage School

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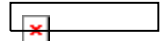
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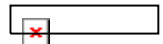
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**Introduction and summary**

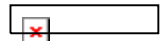


**Purpose and scope of the inspection**



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

**Information about the school**



Clarendon Cottage School was established 15 years ago as a day nursery and expanded to provide for children whose parents wished them to stay at the school after nursery age up to the age of 11 years. The school occupies three sites in the Eccles area of Salford. The preparatory department and two nursery classes are in a large house at one end of Clarendon Road and there is a nursery in a building at the other end of that road, a few minutes walk away. A baby unit is housed in the grounds of Monton Village School, a separate establishment owned by the proprietors of Clarendon Cottage School. This unit and a kindergarten were not part of this inspection.

The school currently has 90 pupils of compulsory school age and the equivalent of 81.5 pupils below compulsory school age. Two pupils are identified as having special educational needs although none has a formal statement of special educational need.

**Summary of main findings**

The school is effective in enabling its pupils to attain high standards. The curriculum and the quality of teaching are satisfactory. The pupils' personal development is good, their behaviour is very good and they are well cared for. There are good procedures for keeping parents informed of their children's progress and for recruiting and retaining staff. The accommodation has some deficiencies.

### What the school does well

- o pupils attain high standards in national tests;
- o their personal development is good, they behave very well, are polite, well motivated and have a good awareness of the world around them;
- o the school has good procedures for recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified and experienced staff;
- o the pupils are well cared for and relationships are good; and
- o parents are kept well informed and involved in their children's education.

### What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

- o carry out the improvements to the premises and accommodation noted in section 5 of this report; and
- o ensure that parents have all the required information as detailed in section 6 of this report.

### Compliance with the regulations for registration

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### 1. The quality of education provided by the school

#### The quality of the curriculum

The school has a curriculum which is broad and balanced overall. The intention stated in the prospectus for parents is to teach the full range of the National Curriculum plus French, drama and a range of extra-curricular activities. Particular emphasis is placed upon the formal teaching of the basic skills, sport and the expressive arts. The school aims to complete National Curriculum

requirements for Key Stage 2 by the end of Year 5 to allow Year 6 to be used for enrichment work and to prepare pupils for entrance examinations. Nursery classes follow the national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum and pupils in the reception classes are taught the National Curriculum programmes of study. In this way the school aims to be at least one year ahead of national requirements. All subjects are represented on the class timetables but these are not always followed precisely and, as most timetables do not contain timings, the monitoring of curricular balance is difficult to achieve.

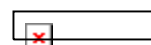
The curriculum policy is supplemented by subject schemes of work, some of which are based on national guidance. The schemes of work are appropriate in all cases and are followed in general terms by class teachers. There is little repetition and the pupils' work shows that they make progress during their time in the school.

The school provides full-time supervised education for its pupils of compulsory school age. The curriculum gives pupils experiences in all the required areas of learning. Two pupils identified as having special educational needs have appropriate individual educational plans which are reviewed and revised regularly. Personal, social and health education is provided and fostered through religious education lessons, assemblies, a house system, prefects and a school council for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are encouraged to take part in community service through, for example, raising funds for a local hospital.

Pupils below compulsory school age are taught in four nursery classes. Their programme is broadly appropriate although there are too many sedentary activities. Some pupils were being taught initial letter sounds before they were ready for such work.

The curriculum provided for pupils of compulsory school age gives them the opportunity to learn and make good progress. The school chooses to enter them for National Curriculum tests and the results are regularly very good. In the most recent tests, all pupils aged seven attained the higher than expected Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. At age 11, all pupils attained the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science; two-thirds attained the higher Level 5 in English and science and just over half did so in mathematics. All but one of the Year 6 pupils have passed entrance examinations for selective secondary schools.

### **The quality of the teaching and assessment**



The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Teachers form good relationships with their pupils and they generate an atmosphere in lessons within which pupils strive to achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and lessons are planned adequately, albeit in outline. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and are returned to at the end of some lessons to check whether they have been achieved. Targets are set for some pupils but these tend to be behavioural rather than curricular.

The preferred teaching method is whole-class teaching which the school prospectus notes 'helps maintain a high class average performance and re-enforces the expectation that all the class can grasp a concept'. Consequently, teachers spend large parts of lessons instructing and demonstrating to the whole class. These sessions are often interesting and engage the pupils' attention. Occasionally, however, they are repetitious and unstructured. Work is then set for the pupils to complete and it is usual for the whole class to attempt the same tasks. Although attainment is generally high throughout the school, the more able are capable of more challenging work and find their tasks too easy. Conversely, in the nursery classes the focus on all pupils doing the same results in some being given activities for which they are not ready.

The pupils respond enthusiastically to all their lessons and enjoy their successes. There is a healthy sense of competition in the work but this does not prevent pupils helping each other out when

necessary. For example, a Year 6 girl patiently explained the method of working to her partner in an investigation into filtration. Teachers are generally encouraging and they give pupils positive verbal feedback although some teachers raise their voices unnecessarily. Written comments in pupils' books are much more limited.

During the week of the inspection, various activities were taking place such as rehearsals for a school production and an adventure excursion. This meant inevitable changes to the regular timetables but, even allowing for this, not all teachers follow the timetable and are therefore unsure about the balance of the curriculum they are teaching. Time management is generally adequate and there are no problems of behaviour management.

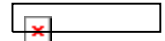
Pupils' attainment and progress are checked regularly through a series of school- devised and standardised assessments, including National Curriculum tests. All pupils have an assessment folder and record of achievement which chart the work completed, test scores and the attainment of specific objectives. These clearly show that virtually all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least, and often more than, the expected progress during their time at the school. The national Foundation Stage Profile is completed for pupils at the end of the nursery year. These show that nearly all pupils attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning one year ahead of expectation.

Written reports are issued twice yearly; these take a traditional form with the individual pupil's performance in each subject and their personal development graded on a five-point scale. Brief comments are added and parents may respond using a reply slip.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

**2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**



This aspect of the school's work is good. The pupils are generally confident and keen to succeed. They take part in all activities enthusiastically and are pleased with what the school has to offer them. They feel valued and report that the school deals quickly with any bullying or any concerns they have. They have a good understanding of fairness and can distinguish right from wrong. There are regular assemblies, and work in subjects such as geography and science sometimes give pupils a sense of wonderment at the natural world.

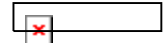
Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. There is a house system with captains, prefects and a head boy and girl; this fosters team spirit and a sense of community. Senior pupils run the tuck shop and decide how the profits are to be spent for the benefit of the school. There is a school council which debates school-wide issues and the pupils develop a social awareness through raising money for charity and community activities such as singing to residents of a local care home at Christmas.

Work on display around the school shows that the pupils of all ages have studied the range of world faiths present in society. They develop a satisfactory understanding of the multi-cultural nature of the local community and of Britain as a whole.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### 3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. All required policies are in place and followed.

Pupils are happy at the school although they report that some bullying occurs which they know is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Staff take this issue seriously, and steps are taken to stop or prevent the problem.

The child protection policy provides staff with appropriate details of procedures. The nursery manager has designated responsibility for child protection and staff refer concerns to her. The organisational plan ensures there is a member of staff qualified in First Aid on each site at all times. The First Aid box and medicines are stored appropriately. Satisfactory records are kept on accidents and medication and staff are aware of pupils with asthma or severe allergies. At the beginning of the school year, parents sign a consent form for their children to go on trips and a policy provides staff with appropriate guidance on managing trips.

A good behaviour policy is in place. Pupils are well behaved, keen to please and well mannered. The school has never imposed sanctions upon pupils for serious disciplinary offences but is aware that it should keep written records if these occur. Pupils are supervised well at all times, including playtimes.

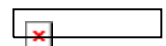
The school complies with all requirements for health and safety. There is a comprehensive policy in place. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out. The most recent fire officer's report was positive but contained a recommendation that the school should purchase a guide. This has not yet been purchased but there is a fire risk assessment in place and all necessary measures are taken for the prevention of fire.

The school's admission register complies with requirements and the attendance register policy ensures that staff complete the registers accurately. Staff follow these procedures correctly.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### 4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



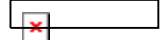
The school is owned by a limited company with three directors: the headteacher, the head of the nursery and a third person who has some administrative responsibilities.

The teaching staff are appropriately qualified and have a range of specialist interests. Many of the teachers have been with the school for a number of years and staff turn-over is low. Support staff are adequately qualified for their roles and the ages of pupils with whom they work. All staff in contact with pupils have been subject to satisfactory clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau and to checks against List 99. The school has good procedures for recruiting new staff which includes detailed consideration of the requirements to fill the vacancy and all the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out.

#### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## 5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. Overall space is adequate but some teaching areas are cramped, particularly the upper floor of the school where the older pupils are based. These classrooms are cluttered and untidy with furniture that is sometimes too small for the older and bigger pupils. The ground floor of the school is more spacious and these classrooms are bright and well ventilated. Pupils benefit from a reasonably sized playground. There are currently no arrangements for pupils with mobility problems to access the upper floor but the school is drawing up plans to increase accessibility of the premises. The nursery is spacious and accessibility is good.

The buildings are satisfactorily decorated but are not cleaned to a high enough standard. Recommendations following a food premises inspection have not all been implemented. There are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils but toilets are not conveniently placed for the 'Robins' group in the nursery and the provision of another water closet in their bathroom would improve hygiene. The 'Prep One' washrooms do not have hot running water.

### ***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

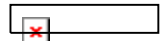
No.

### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that the water supply meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a));*
- *ensure that there are adequate facilities for the hygienic preparation, serving and consumption of food (paragraph 5(m));*
- *ensure the classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 5(n)); and*
- *ensure that the furniture and fittings are appropriately designed for the age and needs of all pupils registered at the school (paragraph 5(r)).*

## 6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



There is a good, friendly and supportive relationship with parents. Teachers are readily available for informal discussions before and after each school day. Appointments can be made for more formal meetings with staff and the headteacher. Pupils have homework diaries which are used for day-to-day communication and dialogue with parents. Parents are happy with these arrangements and only a small minority returning the parent questionnaire did not feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns.

There are many ways by which the school seeks to share helpful information with parents. The prospectus contains a well-illustrated range of detailed information including the school's aims, achievements and its curriculum. There is a comprehensive list of staff employed at the school and also visiting staff who offer additional learning opportunities. Half-termly newsletters provide helpful

general information about events and activities and there is a school website on which a good selection of school information is posted, including the weekly homework for each class. This variety of information is useful but some statutory information is missing.

Parents are given information about their children's progress at two formal parents' evenings in the autumn and summer terms. These are well attended. Reports are sent to parents twice a year giving brief information about their children's achievement and other aspects of their personal development. A small number of parents feel that they do not have sufficient information about their children's progress. Pupils' work is displayed at a curriculum evening in the spring term where there is also information on school choices for older pupils when they leave Clarendon Cottage. Parents are encouraged to consider these options from Year 4 onwards.

An open evening is held annually for prospective parents to see what the school offers. Pupils joining part way through the year can spend time at the school beforehand to prepare for the move. The induction pack for parents is clear and effective in helping pupils settle quickly into the school's routines. At the end of each school year parents receive useful information about the next including the names of their children's teachers, term dates and the extra-curricular clubs which will be running.

All parents are members of the Parent Teacher Association which is active in supporting the school with fund raising events. A committee is responsible for organising these and considering requests from staff for expenditure. A sponsored event was recently held to raise money specifically for some computer equipment and the recent summer fair was very successful.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

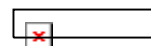
*The school meets all requirements apart from three.*

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- o ensure that particulars of the educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for pupils for whom English is an additional language are included in the school's brochure (paragraph 6(2)(f));*
- o make it clear that parents of pupils and prospective pupils may request information on particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h)); and*
- o make it clear that parents of pupils and prospective pupils may request information on details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).*

**7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**



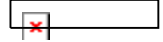
The school has effective procedures for handling complaints. A document prepared for parents sets out a three stage process culminating, should it be needed, in a panel hearing comprising three senior members of another school. However, only just over a half of parents said they were aware of this procedure in their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***



Yes.

## School details



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Name of school:	Clarendon Cottage School
DfES ref number:	355/6023
Type of school:	Preparatory and Nursery
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	2 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 67, Girls 75, Total 142
Number on roll (part-time pupils):	Boys 24, Girls 21, Total 45
Annual fees (day pupils):	£920 per term (2-7); £1,125 per term (8-11)
Address of school:	Ivy Bank House Half Edge Lane Eccles Manchester M30 9BJ
E-mail address:	clarendon.cottage@dial.pipex.com
Telephone number:	0161 950 7868
Fax number:	0161 661 3822
Headteacher:	Mrs E A Bagnall
Proprietor:	Mr J Bagnall, Mrs E Bagnall, Mrs K McWilliams
Lead Inspector:	Mr I A Rodger
Dates of inspection:	5 - 8 July 2004

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