



The Clarkson Infants School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110649
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278479
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Cheryl Thompson LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Trafford Road
School category	Community		PE13 2ES
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01945584867
Number on roll	237	Fax number	01945474538
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Robin O'Connor
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Pam Clark

Age group 3 to 7	Inspection dates 7 November 2005 - 8 November 2005	Inspection number 278479
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Clarkson Infant School serves an area that has been designated as being one of social and economic need. It has 237 girls and boys on roll, including 58 in the Nursery. Children's attainment on entry to school is below average. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language. A few are from traveller families. In some years there is a high number of pupils joining and leaving the school. There is an above average number both of pupils eligible for free school meals and who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Clarkson Infants is a good school where every child matters. It provides good value for money. The school views itself as good and inspectors agree. Pupils and parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. There is an exceptional commitment to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils' outstanding contribution to the community and the school's good care and support for them have a very good impact on pupils' good personal development. Their behaviour is extremely good. As a result of good teaching, pupils learn successfully, make good progress and, from low starting points, attain average standards. Since the last inspection there has been a significant increase in pupils attaining higher than expected standards in national tests. However, in reading, pupils are not sure how they can improve and they are not getting enough opportunities to practise their skills. Consequently, progress in reading is only satisfactory. The curriculum is good, with a strong emphasis on providing exciting visits to widen pupils' horizons. The quality of education and children's achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. The practical approach to learning captures pupils' interests quickly. The very caring relationships between staff and pupils mean all pupils settle quickly into school life. Leadership and management are good. School development planning is based securely on the school's very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. However, it is not making the most effective use of all the information it collects to measure the success of its planning. Similarly, teachers are not making the most productive use of the good targets they set for their pupils. The minor issues raised by the last inspection have been dealt with very effectively and the capacity for further improvement is very good. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance but in spite of its best efforts, attendance remains well below average. Too many pupils miss school due to parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with parents to improve attendance in order to provide a more continuous learning experience for pupils. - Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise reading in order to raise standards. - Make better use of all the information the school holds on pupils' progress. - Improve pupils' understanding and use of their personal targets so that they know specifically how they could develop their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement overall is good although standards, when compared to national figures, are average. Achievement is good at Clarkson and standards are average. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching, and very good attention is paid to their individual needs. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive adult support and are set work at the right level. The more able are set challenging work. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support and

achieve well. Children start in the Nursery with low standards, especially in speaking and listening. In Reception, standards are below average, rather than low. By the time they leave the school, standards are average. Writing and mathematics are particular strengths. In these subjects, a good number of pupils attain higher than average standards. Although standards in reading are average, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good, mainly because they are not practising their reading skills enough. Where pupils practise their reading skills at home, they make better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of the pupils at Clarkson Infants is good. The school evaluated this area as outstanding, but, because attendance is well below average, inspection evidence did not confirm this judgement. Pupils really enjoy all the things they do at school. They are kind and thoughtful and undertake their monitor duties very responsibly. Pupils learn well how to stay safe, for example when they are around fireworks. Pupils are encouraged effectively to lead healthy lives. For instance, pupils have regular physical exercise sessions and write about ways to keep healthy in science projects. The good development of key skills in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) contributes to pupils' future economic well-being. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially through religious education lessons and assemblies. For example, a class assembly allowed pupils to learn about more positive ways to treat others. Pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural society. Year 2 pupils develop a good understanding of how Sikhs pray and learn about their holy book. Outstanding provision for pupils' social and moral development means that pupils' behaviour is extremely good. When asked what they like doing in school, one Year 2 pupil said, 'I like helping other children.' Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. They have danced in the town centre, planted bulbs in a local park and sponsored an African elephant.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Many strengths are seen in the quality of teaching. One significant feature is the teachers' use of open-ended questions, which means that pupils learn to think deeply about their knowledge and understanding. More able pupils are stretched because the teachers set challenging activities for them in lessons. Good teaching methods allow pupils to practise their basic skills. For instance, they carry out investigations into 'sound' effectively in a science session. In one particularly good Year 2 lesson the teacher demonstrated her high expectations when she explained ways to respect the beliefs of Sikhs. This ensures that pupils learn to value different cultures and faiths in positive ways. Lessons often include effective opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, especially in the Nursery. Assessment

activities are used satisfactorily in the school. Individual education plans contain suitable targets, and so pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Pupils' writing is carefully assessed and parents are given copies of the targets pupils need to work on. However, pupils do not have a copy of these targets in school and teachers made infrequent reference to them in lessons observed. Teachers' marking is not as useful as it could be to explain to pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with a good range of out-of-lesson activities. The school is keen to widen pupils' horizons and to this end ensures they go on many visits, including a two day residential trip. Provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is good, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise reading. Pupils use their skills productively in other subjects. Small teaching groups help pupils with learning difficulties and the more able pupils do well, especially in writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school is particularly successful in meeting its aim of providing a caring and happy place to learn. Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. Child protection procedures are particularly comprehensive. Arrangements to settle in new pupils and staff are very effective. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are quickly involved in school life as other children look after them extremely well. Pupils from all backgrounds and with learning difficulties are well supported, cared for and integrated into the school community. Regular visiting pupils from the nearby special school receive a genuine, caring welcome from Clarkson pupils. The school evaluated this area as outstanding but the inspection did not agree. This is because most individual reading targets are not clearly understood by pupils and do not explain specifically how they can work at even higher levels of attainment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very determined leadership of a welcoming and stimulating school where everyone feels valued, cared for and respected. The very strong focus on staff knowing pupils exceptionally well as individuals makes sure that they all make good progress in their learning and personal development. Parents hold the school in high regard and are valued for the important part they play in their child's education. Rigorous evaluation of the work of the school is a particular strength of the headteacher and senior team. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the school. Indeed, they have already noted some of the areas identified for improvement by the inspection.

Through their good checks on pupils' learning and progress, the school collects a good amount of information. However, it is not making the most efficient use of all this information to set targets for pupils and to measure the success of school development planning. There is no complacency however. There were only minor areas identified for attention by the last inspection but these have been addressed very well. The school is always looking to improve and has a very good capacity to do so. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and acted upon. As a result, there are now physical education, French and pottery clubs which pupils eagerly attend. Governors are involved in the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We enjoyed talking to you about what you like doing in school. We were very impressed with how well you behave in lessons and at playtimes. You told us you liked helping others and that your teachers are good at helping you. We noticed how kind you are to other children and, we think you are right, your teachers and teaching assistants really care about you and help you to do your best. They make sure you have the right sort of work to do and that you work hard. We thought it was outstanding that you do such exciting things to help people in Wisbech, such as planting the bulbs in the park and dancing for the elderly people. Your headteacher is doing a great job in making sure you get a good education and helping you become kind and thoughtful young people. We have asked her to do a few things to make your school even better. We have asked her to make better use of all the information about how you are getting on when she and the teachers are doing important planning. We have also asked that you read more often so that you get even better at reading. Also, we would like teachers to help you remember your targets and help you to know how you can reach these. Another thing to improve is attendance. It is really important that you don't miss important lessons. Please can you help your school improve by making sure you come to school regularly.