



Clifton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134840
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 285100
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Pauls Road
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		B12 8LY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4642926
Number on roll	660	Fax number	0121 4644287
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Fry
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr Keith Tatton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Clifton Primary is a new school that opened in September 2005 as an amalgamation of neighbouring infants and junior schools. It is situated near the centre of Birmingham and serves an area of some economic hardship. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupils' standards on entry are well below average. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and many who start school are at the very early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Clifton Primary is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and this has ensured the new school has made a very good start. Excellent support is given to all pupils to help them develop appropriate English so that they can take full part in school life. The school's own evaluation of its qualities is largely accurate, although it underestimates its strength in leadership and management, which are good overall.

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, where the quality of provision is good. Good progress continues in each year and pupils leave for secondary school with average standards. This is because of good teaching which is engaging, challenging and motivating. However, teachers' marking does not consistently tell pupils how they can make their work even better.

The school has a strong ethos that celebrates the rich cultural backgrounds of pupils and supports their personal development well. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good and they develop good relationships with one another.

Pupils enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their lessons and the good range of trips and clubs in which they take part. Parents are very happy with the school and rightly feel that pupils are well supported and cared for. The high quality of monitoring and evaluation and the drive of leadership and management at all levels to further raise standards gives the school very good capacity to make further improvements. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Ensure marking consistently shows pupils how they can improve their work further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to reach nationally expected standards by the time they leave the school. Children enter the Nursery with standards well below those usually found, especially in English and social development. Good teaching, concentrating particularly on developing language and social skills, enables children to make good progress in Nursery and Reception. However, by the time they start Year 1, a significant minority of children have not reached the expected national standards overall, especially in the use of English.

Although standards remain below average at the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, given their starting point. They make best progress in writing and in mathematics. Pupils with limited English skills continue to make rapid gains in their vocabulary through the outstanding support from teachers and other staff who speak community languages.

Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school and standards overall are broadly average by the end of Year 6.

Standards in reading are below those for writing and mathematics and the school is working hard to improve reading standards by providing extra individual support for pupils and booster classes held at lunchtime and during the Easter holidays. While it is too early to gauge their success in Years 1 and 2, test results show rapidly rising standards in reading in Years 3 to 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good and this is reflected in their good behaviour, good relationships and positive attitudes to work. Pupils have a very good understanding of living in a multicultural society and enjoy sharing each other's festivals, which also enriches their spiritual awareness.

Pupils enjoy school and describe school as 'fun-learning'. They feel safe and are confident in approaching a member of the school's staff if they have a worry. They say that staff deal quickly and effectively with rare incidents of bullying. Pupils are proud of the work of the school council, and describe excitedly how they have helped stop parking outside the school gates. Being 'peer mediators' and raising money for charity provides further good experience in taking responsibility and contributing to the community. Pupils' active involvement in such work, and their good development of basic skills, equips them well for later life. Pupils understand clearly the need to eat healthily and take exercise. They do their best to put this into practice in their choice of lunches, and in their enthusiastic participation in physical education lessons and games.

Attendance is rising and is now average. This is the result of rigorous procedures for improvement, such as 'The Walking Bus' that collects children from home, the wide use of rewards and work with parents to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers encourage pupils to be well focused, well motivated and keen. As a result, they work hard and make good progress, although just occasionally some pupils lose concentration in lessons because the pace of work is too slow or the purpose of the lesson is not really clear. Usually, however, well structured and challenging questions really extend and reinforce pupils' learning and understanding. Every opportunity is taken to develop pupils' vocabulary. For example, in Year 3, science pupils use such words as 'nocturnal' and 'habitat' correctly. Teachers provide many

activities that require pupils to work in groups, which helps to develop their social skills.

Teaching assistants and learning mentors are used very effectively to support pupils' learning, ensuring they can fully take part in lessons. Many are able to speak home languages and provide outstanding help in developing pupils' English skills when they first start school.

Marking is regular and praises pupils' good work. However, there is a lack of consistency in its effectiveness in showing pupils how to raise the standard of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes to good achievement by building successfully on pupils' prior attainment and experience. It meets the needs of pupils very well. For example, the popular residential holidays and visits to museums greatly broaden pupils' social and cultural awareness and make a significant contribution to their growing confidence. However, the school recognises the need to provide more planned links between lessons in Years 1 and 2. For example, word processing skills learned in information and communication technology lessons can be practised by using a computer to write and edit stories in literacy classes. The programme to support pupils' personal development is particularly good and ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of topics such as drugs and healthy living. The many extra-curricular activities are well supported and extend pupils' interests and aspirations well. Pupils' eager participation in sports clubs is greatly assisting their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Care and support are outstanding. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are exceptionally well supported, with many of the staff able to converse with them in their home languages. Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or medical problems. This enables all pupils to fully participate in lessons and make good progress. The school cares for its vulnerable children well by making good use of external agencies and specialists to promote their welfare when the need arises. Child protection procedures are secure and health and safety arrangements are robust. Assessment and tracking procedures are good. Pupils are set challenging targets and the school regularly monitors their progress towards achieving them. When progress falters, effective action is taken to remedy the problem. Pupils know their targets well and get regular feedback from their teachers on their progress towards them but they are not always told precisely enough how they can achieve more.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the school have been instrumental in establishing a successful and happy school over a short period of time. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has been central to this. He is providing the school with clear direction and purpose and is setting challenging targets for further improvement. His astute leadership has ensured the process of amalgamation has not consumed all the school's energy and that standards remain the principal focus of the school. He has established a strong ethos in which pupils and staff flourish. Effective middle managers and subject leaders ably assist him.

The school's thorough monitoring and evaluation of performance identified weaknesses in pupils' reading skills and attendance and has led to improvement in both areas. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning has also led to consistently good teaching and achievement throughout the school. The school seeks and responds well to the views of parents and pupils. For example, the school has constructed more footpaths following parents' concerns about access to playgrounds. Nursery attendance times have been changed to better suit parents. The school has purchased more playground equipment following a request from the school council.

The new governing body provides the headteacher with good support. They provide valuable links to the local community. Through their developing understanding of data, governors are now in a strong position to challenge the school in order to further raise standards and improve on the good achievement pupils attain.

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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	NA	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	3	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	2	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. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school.

What we liked most about your school

You are polite and well behaved. The teaching is good. You enjoy your learning, work hard and make good progress. All of the staff care for you well. You have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise. You enjoy the good number of extra activities such as visits and clubs which the school provides. Your headteacher is an outstanding leader who has ensured that this new school has been able to make such a strong start.

What I have asked your school to do now

To really stretch you by making sure that when your books are marked, you are told how you can make your work even better.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.