

Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101893
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	286209
Inspection date	23 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alva Patton
Headteacher	Mrs Anita Sandhu
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Clifton Road Southall UB2 5QP
Telephone number	020 8574 5712
Fax number	020 8843 9097

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This primary school serves a disadvantaged area of Southall. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also above average. More pupils join or leave the school part-way through their schooling than is usual.

Nearly all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly of Indian, Pakistani and Somali heritage. Most pupils are bilingual and around one in ten is at earlier stages of learning English as an additional language.

The headteacher took up her post in September 2006.

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 where pupils do well. As they have recently written in their school prayer, 'We come in different colours, shapes and sizes. We follow different religions. But we are all kind and help each other'. This typifies the harmonious ethos of the school which ensures that pupils from a host of different backgrounds with many different experiences feel safe, grow in confidence and make good progress during their time there. Parents recognise that their children are safe, happy and enjoy school because of the good teaching, care and curriculum the school offers.

Children joining the Foundation Stage generally have less well-developed skills than many girls and boys of their age. For many, it is also their first experience of learning in English. They have good opportunities to talk, play and learn, and, as a result, make good progress. This means that many have 'caught up' by the end of the Foundation Stage. However a significant minority continue to need help. This is particularly true of pupils who are at earlier stages of learning English when they join the school, as well as those with learning difficulties and disabilities. These pupils benefit from good support and guidance from staff and make good progress as a result. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average and pupils achieve well. However, the school has rightly identified that ensuring that all more able pupils are equally well supported and challenged is a relatively weaker area.

The appointment of the new headteacher has provided the school with a good opportunity to review what it does well and what could be further improved. This process has helped the school recognise and celebrate its strengths as well as providing a clear direction for change. For example, senior staff recognise that not all pupils assess how well they are doing in lessons and know how they could do even better. Similarly, teachers who have responsibility for different subject areas were not fully involved in making improvements through the monitoring of pupils' work, progress and lessons. This has already begun to change and, as a result, staff have a much clearer idea of the 'bigger picture' and the part they can play. The impact of such changes contributes to the school's good leadership and management and to its good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teaching consistently challenges more able pupils.
- Extend opportunities for subject leaders to make sure teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Ensure pupils have consistent opportunities to assess their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and just below average at the end of Year 6. This picture hides the fact that most pupils make good progress during their time at the school. The high percentage of pupils who join or leave the school part-way through their education, including many at earlier stages of learning English, influences overall standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, these pupils do well when their starting points are taken into account. Achievement overall is good.

The school has identified that more pupils could reach higher levels in national tests, particularly in English and has made a good start in addressing this. Careful tracking and analysis by staff means they can now quickly identify where pupils could be making better progress and provide extra support or challenge for pupils. This includes setting pupils challenging targets to achieve. Similarly, a whole school focus on how reading is taught has already shown good results. The school plans to extend this to ensure that standards in writing are also further improved. Current pupils are making good progress regardless of ability, gender or ethnic background.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school prioritises the personal development and well being of its pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave very well. As they go through the school, they learn to live healthily, be alert to risk and develop a very good understanding of the needs and feelings of others. They understand the dangers of racism and intolerance and, as a result, get on well together. They are just as keen to ensure that the local area provides them and the local community with a healthy and safe environment. Pupils have a good influence on school life through their school council. The headteacher's suggestion box is another way they make their voices heard. Suggestions ranging from having a zoo to ensuring adults are visible on the playground are regularly reported back to pupils. However this is an area that the school has recognised could be further developed. For example, pupils are about to plan a 'World Garden' at the school with a grant they have received and are looking forward to taking on further roles in school such as year group buddies. Whilst not all pupils reach high standards in academic skills, their good personal and social skills prepare them adequately for the next phase in their education.

Although pupils really enjoy school, attendance is slightly below average. This is because a number of parents take term time leave, even though the school discourages this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils are keen and their attitudes to learning are very good. Teachers cater well for the different abilities, needs and languages within their classes. They are helped in this by strong support from the school's teaching assistants, most of whom are bilingual, and by the school's English language specialists. These adults help to ensure that pupils who are experiencing difficulties get the support in lessons they need.

Changes in staffing and roles mean that some lessons are only satisfactory. This happens when, for example, activities devised for more able pupils are not sufficiently challenging or pupils do not have good opportunities to discuss and assess their own work and progress. However, monitoring by senior staff and sharing teaching approaches are making this rarer and ensuring most lessons are good or better. Pupils have recognised this and are full of praise for 'the way that teachers explain things to us and teach us'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum is interesting and varied. From their earliest days in the Foundation stage, children benefit from a wide range of experiences which help develop their skills across different areas of learning. As a result, they quickly become more independent and enjoy the opportunities they have to choose activities and equipment. Across the school, pupils enjoy practical activities which help them to make good progress in their basic skills such as writing or mathematics. For example, during the inspection, pupils enjoyed writing about a recent trip to the local park. Similarly, a practical activity measuring the football pitch helped pupils with their work on calculating perimeters using a computer programme. However these links between different subjects and between creative or practical activities and academic skills are not consistent. This lack of consistency hinders the school's efforts to ensure that all bilingual pupils who speak English fluently also develop the good academic skills in English they need to do well in their studies.

Pupils benefit from some lessons which are led by specialist staff or visitors, for example in physical education. During the inspection they particularly enjoyed developing their physical coordination through plate spinning and feather balancing as part a workshop on circus skills. A good range of after school and lunchtime clubs help pupils extend and improve their physical and creative skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pupils are keen to tell visitors about the 'safe and secure environment' at the school and explain how 'Teachers are always counting us when we go on trips'. The school works successfully with its parents to ensure they too feel safe and confident. For example, the 'Clifton Mothers Together' group helps mothers who are new to the school or area to make friends and access services. Another example is the school's successful induction programme which ensures that pupils who join the school from overseas get a good start.

There are good links with outside agencies to protect the most vulnerable children and to make sure pupils facing difficulties are quickly identified and helped. School staff and other specialists work well together to provide extra help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities who make good progress as a result.

Academic guidance is in place to help pupils to understand and reach their targets. There are good opportunities in some lessons and subjects for pupils to assess their own progress and learn from helpful marking but this not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school is well focused on further improving the learning and personal development of pupils. The dynamic new headteacher has made a good start. Her clear vision to continue to improve the education that the school provides has enthused her new colleagues. A key area in this is making sure that all teachers who have responsibilities for different subjects have good opportunities to monitor and improve teaching and learning. This work has already

begun in some subjects to good effect. For example, in science, teachers have already benefited from opportunities to share and sample the work of their colleagues. As a result, the subject leader is ensuring that pupils have consistent opportunities to carry out investigations. The school has plans to further extend this approach to the management of all subjects. Governors make a good contribution to school life although they are not yet fully involved in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is improving because the headteacher is providing them with good quality information so that they can hold the school to account. For example, a recent report to governors included a helpful guide on how to interpret data and charts about standards and progress at the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clifton Primary School, Clifton Road, Southall, UB2 5QP

Thank you so much for welcoming me when I visited your school. Your headteacher had written about how impressed visitors are with your behaviour and friendliness. I am no exception so thank you for spending time with me and answering all my questions so thoughtfully and politely. Your headteacher did not mention how brilliant you all are at plate spinning but luckily I was able to see that for myself.

You and your parents told me that you go to a good school and I agree. I could see that you enjoy your interesting lessons and all the other things you do at school. I also agree with you that your teachers take good care of you and help you by explaining things clearly. These are some of the reasons that you make good progress. Another reason is that if you find things difficult, the adults in the school work well together to help you. For some of you this means learning to use English as well as your other languages.

I have asked your school to make sure that the good things which happen in most of your lessons happen in them all. This includes making sure that your teachers give you work that really challenges you and making sure that you know just how to make your work better. You already do this sometimes, for example in mathematics, but not always. One of the ways your teachers are already making changes is by one of them looking closely at how well you learn in a particular subject. For example, they have looked at your science lessons and work and have decided that you need to spend some more time investigating things. This is a good way for them to share ideas and make the school even better so I have asked them to carry on with this.

You told me that your headteacher has 'wonderful ideas'. She thinks your ideas are really good too which is why she is so pleased when you speak to your school council representative or post your ideas in the suggestion box. All these good ideas mean that the school can carry on getting better and better.

Thank you again for all your help and I hope your circus day went well.

Nicola Davies Lead inspector