



Claycots School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132089
Local Authority Slough
Inspection number 293941
Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Monksfield Way
School category	Community		Slough
Age range of pupils	3–11		SL2 1QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 521215
Number on roll (school)	607	Fax number	01753 512974
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Alan Mayne
		Headteacher	Mr Mario Rodgers
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 29–30 January 2007	Inspection number 293941
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a socially disadvantaged area. Although the school admits pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds, the proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average. Just under half are from minority ethnic groups and about one in ten pupils are at the very earliest stages of learning English. Attainment when children start school, whether in Nursery or Reception, is well below average. An increasing number are starting school after the end of Year 1. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Claycots is a good school. The new headteacher has been effective at improving many aspects of the school's work since it was last inspected three years ago. He has maintained a strong sense of community and team work so that all adults are working purposefully to improve the achievement of all pupils. The parents' views of the school are very positive. One parent commented, 'They are an excellent team and work very hard'.

Pupils achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the age of 11 years. There is an improving profile of attainment over the last three years, particularly by the end of Year 2. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children settle very quickly and effortlessly into school life and achieve well. This is a good preparation for future life and learning.

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now of good quality. This is a significant factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and underpins their good achievement. Teachers are particularly good at marking pupils' work, helping pupils identify areas they could improve and celebrating their successes.

The quality of care, guidance and support is also good. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. Parents appreciate this and commented on 'the very good support' their children receive and how they were 'getting plenty of help from staff'. There are effective systems for judging and tracking pupils' progress, and pupils have clear improvement targets so they know what they must do to improve. However, they are given too few opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing.

The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils generally behave well, and are courteous to staff and each other. They understand about the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and regular exercise. Older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities to help others in school.

The school provides a good curriculum that contributes to pupils' good levels of enjoyment. They appreciate the interesting and varied after school activities that are organised for them. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties, the gifted and talented and those who are learning English as an additional language has been successfully improved. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The school is well managed and runs smoothly because of the very effective team work between all members of the senior management team. A new structure for leading subjects has recently been implemented. These new roles are developing well, but it is too soon to measure their full impact on pupils' achievement. Given the good progress made since the last inspection and the accurate self-evaluation, there is good capacity to secure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils aged 7 years have improved significantly since the last inspection. They are now broadly average, despite the many children starting in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are much lower than those expected of three-year-olds. The children make best progress in their mathematical development. Improved provision in the Foundation Stage is helping young children settle very quickly and effortlessly into school life and achieve well.

Pupils have been making good progress between age 7 and 11 years since 2004, although it dipped last year to average. This was due to a significant number of pupils joining the school in Year 6 and unavoidable changes in staffing. However, the current Year 6 are making good progress in English, mathematics and science and are likely to achieve their very challenging targets.

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. Those from ethnic minority groups settle well into school life and achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the gifted and able receive well focused support and also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school, behave well and are keen to learn. This makes a significant contribution to the school's calm and friendly learning environment. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the many cultures represented within the school community which they value and respect. They enjoy the many opportunities that the school has to offer them and speak enthusiastically about it. They know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, staying safe, and report that bullying is infrequent. They are confident that adults will listen to them and quickly deal with any concerns they may have. One parent wrote about the positive outcomes of schooling, 'I can see a great change in the life of my child; in behaviour, participation in activities and communication with other children'.

Attendance is below average but improving. The school is doing all it can by working with parents and rigorously tracking any absence. Pupils contribute well to their community through helping in lessons and serving on the school council. They are well prepared for future economic well-being because they are rapidly acquiring basic skills, making good progress in their learning and cooperating well together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The teachers plan carefully to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. They challenge the more able pupils with additional work, and provide good support for those who need extra help with their learning. Teachers also carefully make certain that pupils with little English understand exactly what they have to do. In addition, teachers use highly effective ways of marking pupils' work which clearly indicates how well pupils are doing and how they can improve. This makes learning relevant for all and underpins their good progress. However, there are areas to be developed. Although there is a sharper focus on the needs of particular groups such as the more able pupils, this is not always recorded in teachers' planning and this can sometimes lead to inconsistencies in the quality of learning across year groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good range of experiences that promote enjoyment of learning. Basic skills are planned effectively. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good with a good balance between work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children. The school has successfully improved the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, the gifted and talented and those who are learning English. This is underpinning the good achievement and improving profile of attainment.

Pupils benefit from a well planned personal, social and health education programme and develop a strong sense of personal and shared responsibility through, for example, the school council and the prefect system. A good range of lunchtime and after school clubs, including sporting, cultural and artistic experiences enhances pupils' learning and adds much to their enjoyment of school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, there are weaknesses. The provision for pupils to acquire specific skills in ICT lessons is good, but there are too few opportunities for them to use and develop these skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's caring and inclusive ethos is based upon positive relationships and a commitment to help every pupil to achieve as well as they can whatever their background or circumstances. This is reflected in the high level of support offered to individuals, such as those learning English as an additional language, and the highly effective way in which the school uses the expertise of staff and visiting specialists. Procedures for child protection and for assessing and dealing with risks are fully in place. The importance the school gives to promoting healthy lifestyles effectively

shapes learners' attitudes to health, including food and physical activities. Parents are confident that pupils are safe and well cared for while in school.

The tracking of pupil's academic and personal development is good. This provides the school with a clear picture of the progress pupils make and helps it set targets for moving pupils forward. A good start has been made in helping some of the older pupils to assess their own progress although this is not yet fully extended to all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership of the headteacher is very good and is strongly focused on raising standards and improving the achievement of all pupils. He is very well supported by the senior management team who share his vision for improvement. Team work is a strong feature of this school. All members of staff understand the part they must play in promoting equal opportunity and ensuring that pupils achieve as well as they can.

Clear and detailed systems for self-evaluation have accurately identified important priorities for development. For example, teaching and learning are regularly monitored and the outcomes are used well to improve the provision for more able pupils. The newly appointed subject leaders have correctly identified how they can develop their areas of responsibility. They have introduced a number of well chosen initiatives but it is too soon to measure their effectiveness at managing change. The governing body is satisfactory at supporting and challenging the school and in meeting its statutory responsibilities.

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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	2

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.

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	2
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

We enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for the very friendly and polite way in which you welcomed us and gave us your opinions. Many of you are very good at expressing yourselves and you think carefully about what is important to you.

We agree with most of your parents that behaviour in the school is good. Those of you we spoke to told us this too. You said that bullying is rare but that it is dealt with well if it does happen. Your school is a very safe place because adults work hard to make it so, and you have clear ideas about how to keep safe and healthy.

We think that you are given a good education which prepares you well for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, we are asking your teachers to give you more opportunities to use the computers during lessons in other subjects to help you with your learning. We would also like to see you more involved in assessing how well you are learning. This will help you have an even clearer understanding of what you must improve. You could also share this with your teachers so they can provide even more help and support than they do already.

With best wishes,

John Earish Lead Inspector