

Claregate Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	104310
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	308569
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	467
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	54
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Thomason
Headteacher	Michael Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	5 July 2004
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chester Avenue Tettenhall Wolverhampton WV6 9JU
Telephone number	01902 558575
Fax number	01902 558581

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large primary school serves an area on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. There are many more pupils at the school now than when it was last inspected. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. A well above average proportion of pupils are from a minority ethnic background, almost all of whom speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average and very few have a statement of special educational needs.

As well as the Nursery classes each morning and afternoon and two Reception classes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the school also provides premises for privately owned breakfast and after-school clubs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Claregate provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents are very happy with the school's performance. Children join the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are better than expected for their age, and make steady progress as they move through the school. Their achievement is satisfactory, as a result of the satisfactory teaching they receive, so that when they leave in Year 6, their standards remain above average. Progress in English is better than that in mathematics, because the teaching is better. This is especially the case in reading, where pupils make good progress. In mathematics and writing, progress is slower, because higher ability pupils do not always make as much progress as they could. From Nursery to Year 4 teachers do not match tasks closely enough to the pupils' ability. Tasks are generally pitched at the middle ability pupils. Lower ability pupils make satisfactory progress with the support of teaching assistants, but higher ability pupils can find the work too easy. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6, where the work builds more effectively on what they have done before.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory because of the satisfactory curriculum and care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils have good attitudes to work and want to do their best. Behaviour is good, so exclusions are very rare. However, pupils lack independence. This is particularly noticeable in the EYFS, where children are not given enough opportunities to initiate activities themselves across all the areas of learning. Partly, this is a result of poor accommodation, with rooms that are too small for the number of children in a class and which limit the types of activity that can be carried out. In other years, pupils remain heavily reliant on their teachers, because they do not have enough opportunities to work using their own initiative and to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils much enjoy coming to school, because of the good relationships they have with their teachers.

The school has made steady progress since it was last inspected as a result of satisfactory leadership and management. The headteacher provides good leadership and has developed an effective team spirit among staff. Priorities for improvement are accurately identified, but the allocation of responsibilities to managers does not sufficiently support actions to improve standards. For example, four staff have responsibility for literacy, whereas only two manage mathematics, which is the school's main area for improvement. Nevertheless, the school's leaders, including governors, have demonstrated that they have the skills necessary to improve the school still further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The EYFS provides a secure environment where staff look after children carefully. As a result of this, and because of the good induction programmes, children settle in to school quickly and happily and their personal development is good. They show high levels of confidence when talking to adults and benefit from the good relationships and role models offered by the teaching staff. Their social development is particularly good, as they are taught how to play and work with one another in a well-disciplined environment. Children come into the EYFS at the beginning of the Nursery with skills generally above the expected levels and then make steady progress through Nursery and Reception and enter Year 1 with above average standards, as a result of satisfactory provision for their learning. Achievement is not better than satisfactory because children are not given enough opportunities to independently explore and experience all the

areas of learning, including regular daily access to the outdoor environment. The current rate of progress is also limited by some weaknesses in assessment. Children's skills and knowledge are not assessed against nationally accepted criteria when they enter the Nursery. This makes it difficult for staff to plan lessons that offer sufficient challenge at the right level to meet the needs of all learners. The exceptionally small classrooms for the Reception classes also severely limit the quality of experiences that teachers can offer. The EYFS coordinator satisfactorily leads a happy and dedicated team, but also has other major responsibilities within the school. She, and other staff, have not received sufficient training on the new EYFS framework.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers from the Nursery classes to Year 4 set work that is more closely matched to the abilities of pupils, so that higher ability pupils in particular find the work more challenging in mathematics and writing.
- Meet statutory requirements in the EYFS by ensuring that all rooms are of a sufficient size and that children are given enough opportunities to experience all areas of learning through child-initiated activities.
- Provide pupils in Years 1 to 6 with more opportunities to work using their own initiative, to develop their skills in independent learning.
- Ensure that management responsibilities are better matched to the school's priorities for development. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress from the Nursery through to Year 4. From then on, their progress accelerates, although standards remain above average in Year 6, as they are in other years. Pupils get plenty of encouragement to read, so their skills improve well throughout the school. Mathematical development in the EYFS is good, but progress slows in Years 1 to 4 so pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards of mental arithmetic are high, but pupils are weaker at using their mathematical skills to solve problems. A similar situation exists in science, where pupils have a good knowledge of topics, but are weaker at carrying out investigations. Progress in writing is satisfactory, but higher attainers do not always reach the standards of which they are capable, and the same applies to mathematics. Girls do not do as well as boys in mathematics, because they lack confidence in their own abilities. Targets for the school's performance are particularly demanding, although actual results fall short of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons and concentrate on their work. Attendance is satisfactory, but some pupils are slow to arrive at school in the mornings. Pupils know how to stay safe, and move around the school in an orderly fashion. They rightly say that there is not enough equipment on the playground and, as a result, break times lack structure. This can lead to bumps and bruises as pupils have little else to do other than to run around. Some pupils are concerned about bullying and although they say that teachers deal with this quickly and effectively, lunchtime supervisors do not always act on their concerns.

Pupils know how to stay healthy, but do not always put this into practice when choosing snacks. Lunchboxes in particular often contain unhealthy meals. Pupils are very active and greatly enjoy the opportunities to take part in sports. Pupils play a good role in the community. Pupils value the opportunities to take responsibility in school and in the wider community. The school council takes its role very seriously and is proud of its achievements. It organises fund-raising activities for charity and members were excited to learn the results during an assembly presentation by a charity for Romanian children. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is considerably enhanced by the wide range of visitors to the school. Older pupils are appointed as prefects and take an active part in ensuring that younger ones behave well. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Older pupils have the opportunity to experience multicultural events and question religious leaders about their beliefs, for example, but this is not extended to the rest of the school. Pupils are articulate and confident in their relationships with adults. Although their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are above average, their preparation for the next stage of their education is limited by their lack of independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school because they get on so well with their teachers. They respect staff and are quick to follow instructions, so lessons proceed in a calm atmosphere and disruption is virtually unknown. The school has excellent information on the standards reached by pupils in Years 1 to 6 in literacy and numeracy, but this is not used well enough to plan work that all pupils will find sufficiently demanding in Years 1 to 4. In the EYFS, the information held is not sufficiently detailed to provide an effective basis for planning lessons. Classes are often given the same work to do, with higher ability pupils provided with extra tasks once they have completed the work. This approach limits the progress of higher ability pupils, because they first have to complete work that they find too easy, and then have to sit and wait for the next task to be given out.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Much of the curriculum is based upon commercial schemes and worksheets that do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to work on their own initiative or solve problems. This limits their independence from an early age and, in the case of girls, reduces their self-confidence. Many girls wrongly think they are no good at mathematics. As a result, they are less likely to put their hand up, or have a go without the teacher's prompting. The school intervenes well to change the curriculum for pupils who are finding the work too difficult, or who need just a bit of a boost to reach the next level in their work. The results of such intervention are clear in the much-improved standards for the pupils involved. The school offers a sound range of extra clubs and activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a caring community. Adults have good relationships with the children and provide strong role models for their attitudes and behaviour. There are good transition arrangements

for the youngest children joining school and for Year 6 pupils moving into secondary education. Procedures for the safeguarding of children and for health and safety are very good indeed. They are especially robust and regularly reviewed. Incidents of bullying are investigated very carefully by teachers, but are not always brought to their attention. There is good provision for children who are vulnerable to harm or to significant underachievement; their progress is monitored well and the school uses its links with other agencies when appropriate. The tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 is exceptionally thorough, but their progress in science is not systematically monitored. Checks on standards in the EYFS, and in science in other years, fail to provide an accurate measure of the progress made. All pupils know their targets, but are less clear about what they have to do to achieve them. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well-planned and carefully monitored support in literacy, but their individual education plans do not provide enough guidance in mathematics. The school is working successfully to increase attendance and has recognised the need to improve punctuality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's managers use the analysis of data on pupils' performance in literacy and mathematics very well to identify the main priorities for improvement. However, the same rigour is not applied to the analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the EYFS and science, so the school's evaluation of its own performance is not completely accurate. Responsibilities are not allocated appropriately among the school's managers in order to drive the school's improvement. One member of staff carries responsibility for both mathematics and the EYFS, for example, both of which are high priorities for improvement, and receives support from another member of staff in mathematics. Four teachers, including two being trained for management roles, manage literacy, where provision is already of a better quality. The headteacher, with support from other staff, carries out the analysis of data and the great majority of the numerous checks on teaching, while at the same time carrying responsibility for the day-to-day management of areas such as child protection. Governors keep a tight control on finances, but do not ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The school has a satisfactory focus on promoting community cohesion.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Claregate Primary School, Tettenhall, WV6 9JU

Many thanks for your help when we recently visited your school. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and how hard you concentrate in lessons. We were also impressed by the way you act as prefects and raise money for charity. You all know how to eat healthily, but some of you do not follow your own guidance and bring unhealthy food to school.

Overall, we found that you are getting a satisfactory education. You learn at the rate we would expect, and leave the school with standards that are above the national average. You quickly learn to read, but some of you, especially those of you who find learning easier, are not doing as well as you could in mathematics and writing. So, we have asked your teachers to make sure you do not have to do work that is too easy before getting on to tasks that really make you think. We have also asked the teachers to give you all more problems to solve on your own, and let children in the Nursery and in Reception think up their own activities so you all learn to become more independent. The rooms for the children in Reception are too small, so we have asked the people who run the school to make sure they are not overcrowded.

You told us how much you enjoy school, because you get on so well with your teachers. They make sure you are safe in school. The people who run the school are making it a better place. Some of the staff have too much to do, as tasks are not shared out well, so some jobs are not done as well as they could be. So, we have asked the school to share out the most important jobs between them.

With all best wishes for your futures

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll

Lead inspector