

Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105907
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308978
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

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	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs B Massey
Headteacher	Miss Catherine Green
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Wroe Street Clifton Swinton Manchester Lancashire M27 6PF
Telephone number	0161 7944124
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning; pupils' personal development and well-being; and provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from brief observations of lessons; discussions with senior and middle leaders, governors and pupils; and scrutiny of pupils' work, school documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but HMI found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school located in Swinton, Greater Manchester. The proportion of pupils eligible to take free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are White British and a relatively large proportion of them are boys. Although the percentage of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability is in line with the national average, the proportion with a statement of special educational need is less than half the national average. There is a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority. The school was awarded Investors in People in 2005, Healthy School Status in 2006 and Activemark in 2007. The headteacher started at the school 18 months ago and three new teachers started within the last 12 months. There has been a high level of staff absence through significant sickness in the last two years.

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. As one parent, typical of many, said, 'The school has a great family feel and values its parent/school partnership.' Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; they believe that their children make good progress, enjoy school, are well cared for and behave well. The school plays an active part in the community. Good links with local churches, external agencies and other schools result in many benefits for pupils' learning and their personal development. The school council, for example, proudly showed the inspector their pedometers given to them by the local high school as part of a drive to improve health and fitness. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities, taking on important and valued jobs, raising money for good causes, and putting on performances for the public. Pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development is good and their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They are active in two hours of physical education a week. There are high participation rates in out-of-hours clubs such as 'fit bods', 'wake and shake' and various sports. Most pupils benefit from regular access to water and healthy options at lunch and break times. They are active at break times and make good use of the different activities and sporting equipment on offer. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe. They are very aware of hazards in and out of school; for example, they had an impressive understanding of internet safety.

Attendance is around the national average and is improving. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of school because teaching is good and teachers provide exciting activities in lessons. Consequently, achievement is good. From low starting points, pupils make good progress so that by the time they leave Year 6, a higher than average proportion of pupils attain the expected Level 4, particularly in mathematics and in science. The whole-school drive to improve pupils' writing skills has been very effective. Pupils now make more rapid progress in English and standards in writing are higher. The numbers of pupils who attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average. This is often because, in both key stages, more able pupils are not challenged or extended as much as they could be. This is also evident in the foundation subjects such as geography and history. In art, however, pupils benefit from specialist and good quality teaching and standards are high, as can be seen on the vibrant displays around the school. In Key Stage 1, standards are rising. Most pupils attain the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school keeps a watchful eye on any potential differences in the progress of boys and girls and works hard to ensure that the provision is successfully adapted to meet the interests of both genders. This is an inclusive school and staff work hard to break down barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability, and those who are looked after by the local authority, make as good progress as their peers.

Pupils learn well because teaching is good. The majority of lessons have a fast pace with teachers using interactive whiteboards, video clips and learning aids skilfully to explain new ideas and capture pupils' attention. Activities that children complete, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, are relevant, useful and are well designed to increase their skills and their learning. In a minority of lessons, pupils make less progress because the tasks are mundane, lack a relevant context and are not designed to extend pupils' thinking. Well informed teaching assistants are deployed strategically to ensure pupils have good support to maximise their learning. In some lessons, pupils evaluate their own and others' progress to identify what they need to do next to improve their work. Marking is good and often includes helpful comments about the next steps that pupils need to make in their learning. There is, however, not always enough opportunity for

pupils to respond to their teachers' comments to improve their work. Although pupils have targets which are set regularly, they are not always at the forefront of their thinking and this lessens their impact.

The school's curriculum is adapted well to meet pupils' needs. For example, over the last two years the curriculum has been adapted successfully to focus on learning information and communication technology (ICT) and writing skills. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and visits which cater for sporting and creative interests. These provide varied opportunities for pupils of all ages to try out new activities and extend their talents.

The school meets government requirements for the safeguarding of pupils and the care, guidance and support for pupils is good.

The school has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership, ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Their vision, shared by staff, is rooted in the drive for higher standards, better teaching and faster pupil progress. Regular assessments, half-yearly pupil progress conferences and detailed records enable subject and senior leaders to track pupils' progress closely and provide a reliable source of information for monitoring the performance of the school. Accurate self-evaluation leads to issues for improvement prioritised for action within the school improvement plan. The system works very well and the effectiveness of this honest self-evaluation is outstanding. Governors support and challenge the headteacher and senior leaders. For example, difficult decisions were taken to tackle inadequate teaching and slow progress made by some pupils. Although pupils' progress has been hampered recently by the high levels of staff absence, effective measures are being taken to minimise the effect on pupils. There is no complacency in this school and it provides good value for money and has good capacity for improvement in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory and there are some features that are good. Children start school with skills and knowledge below those typical of children this age. A good feature of the Foundation Stage is the focused teaching time to ensure that children make at least satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. There is a missed opportunity in some lessons to get all children involved as active learners. Teachers provide a good balance of activities between those led by an adult and those initiated by the children. A particularly good feature is the focus on strengthening children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Activities are generally well planned but a minority do not meet children's needs and do not enable them to make progress on their prior learning. Groups of children organise themselves confidently because routines and systems are well established. Children are assessed thoroughly and detailed records of their progress are kept. The children have access to the outdoors on a rota basis and this time is used for a variety of activities. There is a missed opportunity, however, during the outdoor provision to extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding by asking them well considered questions and through high quality interventions in their learning. Day-to-day management is good and the opportunity for parents and carers to come into the unit to settle the children and liaise with the staff is a good feature.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in all subjects.

- Develop teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage further to ensure all children are active learners and make good progress.

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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	2
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

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. You were very helpful in telling me about your work and about all of the activities that you do during and after the school day.

I agree with you that Clifton is a good school. You contribute to this by your hard work, good behaviour and the way you respond in class. Some of you said that there was some name-calling at break times but this was dealt with effectively by staff and there are consequences to poor behaviour. You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and how to stay safe. It was good to see you all being so energetic at break and lunchtime. I was particularly impressed by the school council and their knowledge about internet safety. Teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 2. Lessons and the activities you do are interesting, and you are fully involved in your learning. As a result of the good teaching, you make good progress and reach standards that are similar to those of other children in the country. I have asked the teachers to try to increase the number of you getting higher levels in every subject in the curriculum.

Teaching for the younger children is satisfactory but some aspects could be improved so I have asked the school to carry on developing teaching and learning in the early years so that all children make good progress.

I wish you every happiness for the future.