

John Clifford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122539
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314320
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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	302
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Williams
Headteacher	Mr Simon Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2003
School address	Nether Street Beeston Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG9 2AT
Telephone number	0115 925 8057
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves the community of Beeston, west of Nottingham, but increasing numbers of pupils live outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry is below that normally expected of three-year-olds. An above average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language and over 10% of all pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The school gained the Healthy Schools award in 2006. The headteacher joined the school at the beginning of the term of the inspection but worked closely with staff during the preceding term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

John Clifford Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education and satisfactory value for money. The recently appointed headteacher has brought stability after successive changes in leadership. His rigorous, yet caring, approach has quickly won the confidence of staff, pupils and parents alike. His accurate evaluation of the school has given a clear direction and a boost to the drive to raise standards.

Standards in Key Stage 1 improved markedly in 2006 and this was followed by a similar improvement in Key Stage 2 in 2007. Standards are now broadly average throughout school, with the majority of pupils making satisfactory progress from the good start they make in the Foundation Stage. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well because they receive effective support.

Another important factor in recent improvements in standards has been the support that teachers have received from local authority staff. This has been especially influential in introducing assessment and tracking systems that have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve. This initiative had a huge impact on the Year 6 cohort for 2007, many of whom made particularly good progress during their final year in the school. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because the effective use of assessment is not yet fully embedded and impacting equally in all classes. Nevertheless, teachers and support staff do much to make learning enjoyable, promote personal development effectively and ensure that pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds are fully included.

The curriculum is good. Recent improvements to provision for music and drama and to the range of out-of-school clubs and activities do much to promote personal and academic development and pupils' enjoyment of learning. Sound procedures for safeguarding pupils are the basis of the school's strong arrangements for pastoral care. Adults respond promptly to pupils, especially those who are in any way vulnerable, and provide good personal care and guidance. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils contribute effectively to the school community through their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Academic guidance for pupils is less effective. The setting of targets is now established but teachers' marking and their dialogues with pupils do not always give pupils a clear understanding of their targets or how to achieve them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's strong leadership is already having a beneficial impact on teachers' performance in the classroom and on the quality of curriculum provision. However, the school's capacity to improve further is currently no better than satisfactory because other staff with management responsibilities do not have a prominent enough role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school or in planning for school improvement. Similarly, governors do not collect enough first-hand information about the school to enable them to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. They make good progress and transfer to Year 1 with attainments in line with national expectations. Children learn effectively because teaching is good. Staff work together well to plan a good range of activities that motivate children and engage them in their learning. There are effective systems for

recording children's attainments, but these are not always used as well as they could be to ensure that children engage in activities that are well matched to their abilities when they work or play independently. There is a strong focus on personal, social and emotional development and on fostering the use of language, especially for children who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Children's good progress in these areas lays firm foundations for future learning. Staff have done much to develop the outdoor curriculum, but have not yet introduced a structured outdoor play programme.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that is matched closely to pupils' abilities and prior attainments.
- Improve academic guidance so that all pupils know exactly how well they are progressing and how to improve their work.
- Strengthen school improvement planning by giving staff with leadership responsibilities at all levels a more prominent role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Extend governors' oversight of the school by giving them more opportunities to gather first hand information about the school's work.

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 in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. Their scores in the 2007 national assessments for seven-year-olds were close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, results vary from year to year because increasing numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are joining the school, and many who join speak English as an additional language. Standards in Years 3 to 6 have been more variable in recent years and in 2006, there was evidence of significant underachievement, particularly amongst boys and more able pupils. However, standards rose markedly in 2007. Many pupils made exceptionally good progress during their final year in school and exceeded the nationally expected standards for their age because teachers' expectations were high and the support that they received was effective. Nevertheless, the picture throughout Key Stage 2 as a whole is one of average standards and satisfactory achievement. Whilst underachievement has been largely eliminated, the school's improved tracking systems are not yet embedded firmly enough to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is satisfactory. Attendance rates are improving because the school's procedures for promoting regular and punctual attendance are effective. Pupils behave well in assemblies and lessons, relate well to staff and have good attitudes to work. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, with assemblies, visits and visitors contributing well to these areas of pupils' learning. Pupils know how to keep safe and adopt increasingly healthy lifestyles, as demonstrated by the Healthy Schools award. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives, for example by developing sound academic skills, working together co-operatively and taking part in the

democratically elected School Council. Their contribution to the wider community, through their support for local charities and community projects, is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons throughout the school are enjoyable and make good use of interesting and exciting resources to engage and maintain pupils' interest. For example, teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively when presenting and reviewing lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they receive effective help from teachers and support staff. Assessment is satisfactory overall. There are good systems to measure pupils' progress but teachers' use of performance information is inconsistent and so some work is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities or prior attainments. The school has highlighted this as an area of priority for development for the coming year. Marking is regular and accurate but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to explain to pupils what they need to do next in order to improve. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where not all pupils confidently know what their targets for improvement are.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. There is a suitable emphasis to developing pupil's skills in literacy and numeracy and provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection. The strong emphasis on developing personal and social aspects of learning throughout the school gives pupils a good start to school life. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Pupils in all year groups from Foundation 2 to Year 6 take part in the good, varied range of clubs and sporting activities, which add to their enjoyment of learning and to their personal, social and physical development. This range has been significantly extended recently. Visiting teachers bring added quality to the curriculum in the creative and performing arts, which contribute effectively to pupils' cultural development. The school modifies its curriculum effectively to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is similarly effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Sound procedures for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, underpin the school's caring approach. Pupils are confident they can confide in an adult if problems arise and parents appreciate the school's very inclusive approach. Good initiatives, such as the introduction of 'The John Clifford Way', promote a positive and supportive ethos. Strong links with the school's business partner have benefited the whole community and effective work with local authority staff has been a spur to school improvement. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection and these pupils now make good progress. However, the school does not yet use the information it gathers about other pupils' performance effectively enough

to guide them and set targets to improve their progress. As a result, pupils do not always know whether they are making enough progress or how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher is already providing a strong lead that has energised staff and given a fresh impetus to the drive to raise standards. His initial evaluation of the school has been searching and largely accurate. Consequently, his moves to strengthen the curriculum, to improve communication at all levels, to build a stronger team spirit and to identify and agree whole-school priorities have done much to raise the morale of the staff and to improve their performance in the classroom. He is now striving to build consistency and to 'lock in' the recent upturn in achievement and standards. He is, rightly, seeking to distribute management roles and responsibilities more widely and to put in place rigorous procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for planning for school improvement. Work has already begun to improve the ways in which leaders at all levels use performance data for tracking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets to raise attainment. Though satisfactory, it is still too early for this work to impact fully on pupils' achievements throughout school. Governance is satisfactory. However, several new governors have joined the governing body and so, once their induction and training is complete, there is scope for governors to be more active in monitoring the school's work.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of John Clifford Primary School, Beeston, Nottingham, NG9 2AT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed watching you at work and at play and talking to pupils and others about all of the good things that you do there.

This is what we found out about your school.

- Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their time in school
- Almost all of you behave well, work hard in your lessons and make satisfactory progress.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are just learning to speak English get all the help they need to join in fully and do well.
- You thoroughly enjoy all of the activities that there are for you and most of you are growing up to be active and healthy.

In order to help, I have asked Mr Thompson and the other adults to do four things.

- We have asked your teachers to use all that they know about you to plan lessons that really move you on as quickly as possible.
- We have also asked them to make sure that you all understand your targets and know how to improve your work. You can help by always doing your very best.
- We have asked Mr Thompson to give more members of staff the chance to check how well you are doing, so that they can plan ways to help you do even better.
- We have also asked the governors to check more regularly, on how well you and everybody else in school are all doing, so that they too can help the school to improve.

I hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at John Clifford Primary School.

Best wishes

Glynn Storer

Lead Inspector