

Cliff Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124647
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	315003
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

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)	301
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Leek
Headteacher	Mr Owain Richards
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cliff Lane Ipswich Suffolk IP3 0PJ
Telephone number	01473 251604
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes nursery and reception children. The proportion of children eligible for a free school meal is below average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a small number from Indian and mixed race heritage. Nearly all have English as their home language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children start in the EYFS with the skills and knowledge expected of their age. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark and the International School Award, and is a FA Charter school. At the time of the inspection the school had recently appointed four new teachers to replace four who had left. The subject leaders for EYFS, English and mathematics were new to their posts.

The school accommodates a before- and after-school club and a holiday club which is not run by the governors and which was subject to a separate childcare inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

One of the governors suggests that a priority for the school is to get the seeds they have planted to grow, flourish and produce the results they want. This is a particularly apt description of where this school is at on its improvement journey. The headteacher has planted the seeds for future success by creating a warm and welcoming school where everyone feels valued and by establishing a staff with a common sense of purpose and a focus on developing the whole child. The result is that children enjoy learning, work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school. They have the right attitudes towards learning because teachers have developed very good relationships with them. Standards are average and rising and achievement, though satisfactory overall, shows signs of improvement. This is because there is more good teaching now enabling children to make good progress, but a significant proportion remains satisfactory. Parents confirm that they and their children like school. One wrote, 'my children are both happy at school' while another wrote, 'I am happy with the school'. The inspectors investigated the one or two issues raised by parents on the inspection questionnaires and were satisfied with the school's responses.

Staff have made changes to the way they plan and deliver learning activities to children to try to make them more interesting and relevant. These developments are very recent and their impact on children's learning has yet to be evaluated. An excellent range of after school and lunchtime clubs and the effective use of visits and visitors enhance children's learning well and contribute effectively to their personal and social development. Effective pastoral care of children is a particular strength of the school and results in them feeling safe and well looked after. The school has systems for checking how well children are doing in English and mathematics but limited accurate evidence of their rate of progress in other subjects and in the EYFS. Senior leaders lack a clear understanding of the information they receive annually on the results of national tests. Consequently they have an over optimistic view of how well the school is doing though there are clear signs of improvement.

There is no doubting the commitment of staff and governors to drive improvement. However, this has led to an over ambitious school development plan with too many targets. Governors have an efficient and effective committee structure in place. They are supportive and not afraid to ask challenging questions. However, the school did not have all the required information on its single central record at the start of the inspection though staff had rectified this before the end. Taking in to account what the school has already done and what it needs still to do, it has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children in the EYFS enjoy an appropriate range of activities matched to their ages and abilities. They have a good balance between activities they choose themselves and those directed by adults. The school provides a good range of appropriate resources to encourage children to investigate and explore independently and with adult support, both indoors and out. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development means that they settle quickly into the routines in the EYFS. The school focused recently on smoothing the transition children make from Nursery to Reception and on to Year 1 and this has paid dividends in making it easier for them. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning through the EYFS so that they enter Year 1 with the skills and knowledge expected of their ages. However, the school

has no formal systems for checking and recording what children know and can do when they enter the EYFS so it is difficult for staff to evidence accurately the rate of their progress. Staff recognise that the current information the school has on how well children are progressing in the EYFS is unreliable. All the requirements to ensure children's welfare and safety are in place. The school has recently appointed a new leader for the EYFS and it is too early to be able to evaluate the full impact of that leadership on children's development, though there are ambitious and comprehensive plans to improve the environment in liaison with a nearby university.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the school's development plan, by having a smaller number of key priorities based on a rigorous and accurate evaluation of the school's performance and with clearly measurable targets focused on improving the rate of children's learning.
- Develop rigorous and manageable systems to improve the accuracy of assessment in the EYFS and subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Evaluate the impact on children's academic and personal development of recent changes to the curriculum and staffing.

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

Over recent years standards at both key stages have been broadly average and children have made satisfactory progress in their learning in English, mathematics and science. There have been no significant differences in the pace of learning of different groups of children or different subjects although the school's evaluation of teaching quality shows that the most able are not always given hard enough work. Those who need extra help with their learning have also made satisfactory progress. Within that satisfactory picture, the school has begun to raise standards and improve the progress children make and is on the way to accelerating the pace of that improvement. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of children's work during the inspection confirm that standards are average. In some lessons children are making good progress in their learning though in others progress remains satisfactory. This is because while more teaching is now good a significant proportion is still satisfactory. The school is setting increasingly challenging targets which are beginning to accelerate improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's strong focus on making learning enjoyable and on developing the whole child has led to children's good personal development. Their social and moral development are particularly good so that they get on very well with each other at work and at play and there is very little bullying. Children say they sometimes fall out but that if they have worries they can ask an adult for help in resolving them. They say that the vast majority of children behave well all the time. The school misses opportunities to develop children's spiritual and cultural awareness. For example, there is not always time in assemblies for quiet personal reflection and children's knowledge of the diverse religions that make up modern Britain is no better than satisfactory. The Healthy Schools and Activemark awards are indicative of the strong focus on developing healthy lifestyles and children respond well to the opportunities they are given. They have

good opportunities to take on responsibilities within the school community through membership of the school council and the Cliff Lane helpers. They enjoy raising funds for charities. The school's links with schools overseas bring a global dimension to children's understanding of community and their place in it. They are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling and adult life by gaining basic skills in English and mathematics and developing very good social and interpersonal skills. Children say they thoroughly enjoy school and this was confirmed by their positive attitudes and behaviour during the inspection. However, attendance is only average and shows a slight declining trend over recent years which the school attributes to parents taking their children on holiday in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While there is now more good teaching, with occasional outstanding lessons and none that is inadequate, there is still a significant proportion that is satisfactory. Children work hard and pay attention because their teachers have developed good relationships with them. Teaching makes effective use of the interactive whiteboards and other information and communication technology resources to capture and hold children's attention. Where teaching is good, children have activities to complete at different levels of difficulty and teaching assistants provide very effective support. Where teaching is satisfactory lessons do not always make the best use of extra adult support. The best marking tells children what they have done well and what they could do to improve but in some books marking is little more than ticks and effusive praise. Good lessons are well paced but at other times children sit too long listening to adults.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children clearly enjoy the range of learning activities the school provides. Staff go out of their way to make learning enjoyable and the school has just revised the curriculum again to ensure it meets children's needs. These changes are too new for the school to have had a chance to evaluate their impact on children's learning and personal development. Children spoke enthusiastically about the special days the staff organise like the Victorian day and look forward to the outings that support their learning so effectively. Staff place a strong emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science without losing the breadth of the curriculum. Good links with local companies help to develop children's understanding of the wider community and their role within it as well as engaging them in considering the environment and their responsibilities for protecting it. International links help children to appreciate life in other parts of the world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care of children is very good. They say that they are confident that staff will help them to resolve any issues or worries they may have so that they feel safe and well looked after in school. The school has a calm purposeful atmosphere and children feel valued. Academic guidance and target setting for English and mathematics are comprehensive, though some systems for checking how well children are doing are relatively new and still developing. The school has limited systems for checking how well children are doing in other subjects. Checks

on progress in the EYFS are not accurate or rigorous. Children know their targets and say that teachers tell them what is good about their work and what they need to do to make it better. The school identifies children who need extra help with their learning but some of the targets staff set them are too broad and need to be much more precise. All the requirements to ensure children's safety and well being are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked successfully to establish a warm and caring ethos in the school where everyone feels welcomed and valued and children enjoy learning. He and the governors show a strong commitment and determination to continuous school improvement. This enthusiasm to improve things has led to a school development plan that is too long and complex. The result of such an ambitious development plan is a lack of focus on key priorities and too many targets that are not specific or measurable. The school has increasingly comprehensive systems for checking teaching quality and for tracking children's progress in English and mathematics. Staff work hard to ensure that all children are fully included in the life of the school. They are successful in eliminating any variations in the progress of different groups of children. The school has successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection, and managed the recent turnover of staff well. It is clearly a school moving in the right direction thanks to the commitment and dedication of the headteacher, his staff and governors.

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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?	2
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	3
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?	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	2
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	2

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Cliff Lane Primary School, Ipswich, IP3 0PJ.

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school a little while ago. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

There are some good things about your school. For example, your behaviour is good and you work hard in lessons. The adults in school take good care of you and help you if you are worried. You enjoy school and say your lessons are interesting. Some lessons are good and you learn a lot. Your standards in English and mathematics are around the same as in most schools. The headteacher, governors and staff are really keen to help you to learn and to grow into sensible and mature adults.

There are some things the school could do better. The teachers have recently changed the way they plan what you learn to try to make it more interesting. We have asked the staff to check how well these changes are helping you to learn and develop. The teachers check how well you are doing in English and mathematics. We have asked them to do more to check your progress in other subjects and in the Nursery and Reception. Because the staff are so keen to make the school better they have a big document called a school development plan that lists all the things they would like to do. We have asked them to look at just those things that will be most effective in making your school better.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to behave as well and work as hard as you do now. You can also tell your school council what your ideas are for making the school better so that they can discuss these with the teachers. I wish you all well for the future.

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector