

Clifton Lodge School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	307/6066
Unique Reference Number	101955
Inspection number	322027
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Clifton Lodge is an independent school for boys aged between 4 and 13 years with 132 on roll, opened in 1979. The school changed proprietor as recently as April 24 2008 and is now part of Cognita Schools. The current headteacher is to retire this term after thirty years of service. A new headteacher has been appointed and will be in post this September. Clifton Lodge was last inspected in March 2004.

The school occupies a large Victorian detached house in a residential area of Ealing. Pupils are prepared for common entrance and scholarship examinations and the majority transfer to the senior school of their choice at the age of 13. The school offers a predominantly Christian-based education, whilst admitting boys from other religions.

The Clifton Lodge Choristers consisting of fourteen boys is a distinctive feature of the school. The choir practise daily, sing a weekly public assembly and regularly perform in public at a range of venues.

Evaluation of the school

Clifton Lodge is a good school that cares well for pupils, with a deserved reputation for academic achievement. Pupils enjoy attending school and are positive about their school and their education. Teaching across the school is predominantly good. The size of the school and classes allows staff to get to know their pupils well and these positive relationships help to engender mutual respect and result in good levels of care.

The school meets the majority of regulations with the few exceptions detailed in the 'Compliance with regulatory requirements' section of this report.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good.

The curriculum is good. In the Reception and Year 1 class there is a strong focus on the acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This is not to the detriment of other subjects; a comprehensive range of stimulating topic work for Reception

children ensures that they are given suitable opportunities to develop in all areas of learning. The curriculum includes a specific phonics (letter sounds) programme and children read twice a day, with support from parents, resulting in good standards of reading. The curriculum for pupils in Years 2 – 8 is determined by the syllabus for the common entrance exam, which results in a comparatively narrow curriculum. This serves to support the focus on academic achievement consistent with the main aim of the school and pupils make good progress and achieve well. The curriculum provision for technological subject areas is weaker, with more limited provision for information and communication technology and design technology. The school's curriculum for religious education has recently been extended to religions other than Christianity and pupils are now learning about a range of faiths and cultures. In addition, well attended and enjoyable after-school activities enhance the curriculum that the school offers.

The small class sizes ensure that teachers tailor activities to meet the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. These pupils receive additional support from an able special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). As a result, these pupils make good progress, with a resulting increase in their self-confidence. Parents are quick to recognise this and equally quick to attribute their praise.

The quality of teaching and assessment across the school is good. Teaching in the Reception class is good. The teacher has established strong professional relationships with children and in this supportive environment they produce high standards of work. A teaching assistant helps these younger pupils with their reading. All teaching in classes from Year 2- 8 is undertaken by subject specialists, which has a positive impact on achievement. Where teachers' subject knowledge is secure they display a confidence in their approach to teaching, which engages pupils and allows for their greater participation. In these classes teachers have high expectations of pupils, time is rarely wasted and work set closely matches the range of abilities of each individual pupil. There are considerable strengths in the teaching of mathematics, English and choral music. In the few examples of satisfactory teaching, teachers are over reliant on worksheets. In these satisfactory lessons pupils' attitudes, whilst still positive, fall below the very good attitudes apparent across the rest of the school.

Marking is completed regularly across the school and provides pupils with praise and encouragement and there are notable instances where this extends to more helpful developmental suggestions. Formal assessments occur twice a year and the results are recorded, communicated to parents and used as the basis for a whole staff review of individual pupil's progress. The potential for this data to be used to more closely track and analyse pupil progress has not yet been realised.

Pupils make good progress in their learning. Children in the Reception class arrive at school with levels of attainment above those expected. The school quickly supports these pupils and almost without exception, they make rapid progress in all areas. Pupils who find learning difficult also make good progress when they are taught by the SENCO. Her good communication with individual teachers ensures that new skills

are applied and progress improves as a result. However, time is not allocated to the SENCO to ensure that this happens consistently across the school.

Progress from Years 2 to 8 is good and the vast majority of pupils go on to achieve good results in the common entrance exams and attend the secondary school of their choice. Each year a small but significant number of pupils from Clifton Lodge is awarded scholarships to public schools. Results in GCSE mathematics show that pupils make outstanding progress in this subject. Pupils as young as nine years old achieve Grade C or above in GCSE, whilst a number of pupils aged 12 and 13 have achieved Grade A and A* over the last five years.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In the words of a parent, 'The respect that teachers and boys have for each other whatever their race, creed or colour is very special indeed.' The school has more recently drawn on parents and pupils as an educational resource and as a consequence pupils have gained a greater understanding and appreciation of each others' cultures and religions. Pupils have a good understanding of public institutions and services.

The school places a premium on good manners, considerate behaviour and courtesy. This is evident throughout the school where pupils are unfailingly polite and of good conduct. They relish the opportunity to let off steam in the playground, where they play together boisterously but with good nature. Arrangements to promote good behaviour in and around the school are effective; pupils clearly enjoy school, their attendance levels are good and their attitudes in lessons are positive with a clear desire to learn and do their best. Older pupils make positive contributions by hearing younger pupils read and acting as duty monitors. The choristers make a strong contribution to the community. The school prepares pupils well for their futures in schools and in life generally.

The mutually respectful relationships encourage pupils to develop confidence in themselves and their own abilities. Pupils are articulate speakers and display a good level of general knowledge on a wide range of topics. They enjoy opportunities to discuss and express their opinions. The school has begun to harness this enthusiasm by increasing opportunities in lessons for pupils to consolidate their learning through focussed discussions and explanations.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring that the health and safety of pupils is a high priority. First aid procedures are clear and staff are appropriately trained in first aid. Efficient administrative staff ensure that the necessary arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are in place. Good care is evident in the arrangements for fire safety and

evaluations recorded after fire drills are used to improve and refine procedures. Appropriate risk assessments are completed for each school trip with pupils well supervised and their good behaviour attracts complimentary comments from members of the public. Instances of bullying are rare with pupils reporting that staff follow up and deal with these occurrences effectively. Team points provide a suitable incentive and the school involves parents when sanctions are required. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Prior to the appointment of staff, the school completes checks on candidates' previous employment record and obtains references on their qualifications and character. The school maintains a single central register of the checks made. The school has recently reviewed its application form and appended an additional question on the medical fitness of candidates. The veracity of these submissions is not checked.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively, safely and securely. Classrooms are kept clean and are of appropriate size with sufficient lighting, heating and ventilation. The school has increased the number of washbasins and now complies with the regulations on the washroom facilities for staff and pupils. The school is aware that it does not provide separate and suitable facilities for pupils who are ill. Staff take care to contact parents as quickly as possible in the event of illness.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

There has been a very recent change in ownership. The new proprietors are aware that the school prospectus does not currently contain all the requisite information, including details on discipline and exclusions, and are in the process of producing a revised version.

Procedures for handling complaints

The complaints procedure complies with the great majority of the regulations but fails to include information on confidentiality. These procedures have not been clearly communicated to parents, leaving a number of parents to report that they do not understand or are not aware of the school's complaints procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- Prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff (including volunteers), carry out appropriate checks to confirm their identity, medical fitness, right to work in the United Kingdom, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references and take such information into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(2)(a)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- Provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- Provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- Ensure the complaints procedure provides that correspondence, statements and records of complaints are to be kept confidential (paragraph 7 (k)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Increase the curriculum provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology (D&T).
- Encourage greater pupil involvement by increasing the opportunities to investigate, discuss, and explain ideas orally.
- Use assessment information to track and analyse pupils' progress more closely.

School details

Name of school	Clifton Lodge School		
DCSF number	307/6066		
Unique reference number	101955		
Type of school	Preparatory school for boys		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 Sept 1979		
Age range of pupils	4-13		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 132	Girls: 0	Total: 132
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8568 - £9294		
Address of school	8 Mattock Lane Ealing London W5 5BG		
Telephone number	0208 579 3662		
Fax number	0208 810 1332		
Email address	admin@cliftonlodge.net		
Headteacher	Mr Blumlein		
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI		
Dates of inspection	14–15 May 2008		