

Claytons Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110326
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325132
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beryl Chapman
Headteacher	Mr David Orford
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
School address	Wendover Road Bourne End SL8 5NS
Telephone number	01628 525 277
Fax number	01628 552 779
Email address	office@claytons.bucks.sch.org

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the school improvement partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence, including the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, pupils' work in their books, the quality of teachers' marking, and the questionnaires completed by 121 parents or carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the school's evidence that pupils are making good progress, and the extent to which Year 6 pupils are on track to maintain above-average standards
- the level of challenge for more-able pupils, and whether assessments are used consistently, so that all groups of pupils are making good progress
- how well the curriculum is modified for pupils in the additional resource provision (ARP) and how well they are cared for
- the extent to which leaders monitor the impact of initiatives so that they have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness.

Information about the school

Outcomes of the analysis of the self-evaluation form

Most of the pupils at this larger-than-average primary school are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, although no one group predominates. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools. The school has additional resource provision consisting of a 12-place department for pupils with social and communication difficulties. As a result, the proportion of pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage join the school in the Nursery. The school has the Sportsmark award.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

- Claytons Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. A combination of satisfactory teaching and leadership enables pupils to make the progress expected of them, and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Children get off to a sound start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good links are established with parents. This enables children to settle in quickly and enjoy their learning, and most reach the goal expected of them by the end of Reception.
- Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 4. Progress accelerates in Year 5 and 6. Senior leaders and staff were disappointed in the national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2008. They have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning for older pupils and, as a result, they make good progress. Year 6 pupils are well on track to maintain the above-average standards seen in previous years.
- Across the school, there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress, and inconsistencies contribute to the unevenness of pupils' learning. The work is not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' different capabilities so that, for example, more-able pupils could sometimes be stretched more. Teachers give good feedback to pupils in literacy, but in other subjects their comments are often not precise enough to ensure that pupils know how well they have done and how they can improve. Occasionally, teachers over-dominate the lessons, which limits the scope for pupils to develop independent learning skills and explore their own ideas.
- The school takes good care of pupils, who enjoy school and feel safe and secure in its welcoming and supportive environment. This is appreciated by parents, one of whom noted, 'I feel welcome to speak to my children's teachers at any time, and know that the staff genuinely care for their well-being.'
- Pupils make good progress in their personal development, are well motivated and eager to learn. They behave maturely, and contribute well to the school's smooth running, for example by acting as school councillors and carrying out a range of responsibilities. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, so that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities feel valued. As one put it, 'This school is for everyone.'
- Teachers keep a close check on pupils' all-round development and carry out regular assessments of their work. This information is gathered together and collated annually by senior staff. This is too infrequent to ensure that potential

- underachievement is identified and tackled quickly enough.
- Senior staff and governors monitor lessons regularly and identify appropriate areas for improvement. These priorities are not always followed up with sufficient robustness to ensure that inconsistencies in teaching, learning and pupils' progress are ironed out. Nevertheless, successful work to improve teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, and improvements to the provision for pupils with learning difficulties in the ARP, show that they have the capacity to sustain a satisfactory level of further improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - ensuring that work matches pupils' individual needs more consistently
 - providing pupils with more precise feedback about their learning and how they can improve
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate their own ideas.
- Keep a closer check on pupils' progress by ensuring that assessments are recorded and collated more regularly.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching, learning and pupils' progress by using the outcomes of monitoring activities more rigorously to secure improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons observed, pupils make good progress where the teaching is good, and this was particularly the case for older pupils. In its last inspection, the school was charged with raising achievement and standards, in writing and mathematics in particular, by providing more-able pupils with more challenging work. Inspectors looked closely at this and found that success has been mixed. In the good lessons seen during the inspection, a good level of challenge was given to more-able pupils and, as a result, they learned well. However, in some lessons more could have been expected of them, and their progress was slower. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because they are generally well supported. Improvements in provision in the ARP mean that the progress made by these pupils is accelerating, and it is often good. There is no significant difference in the rate of learning of pupils from different backgrounds.

Pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is confirmed by the school's performance in national assessments in recent years, and by inspectors' observations of lessons. The unvalidated results for Year 6 pupils in 2008 were lower than the school expected, so leaders and staff took steps to improve provision in Years 5 and 6. Their success in doing so means that these pupils make good progress, and those in Year 6 are well on track to attain above-average standards. National tests show that all groups of pupils do as well as, or

better than, their peers nationally. However, across the school, evidence from lessons, pupils' books and the school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that the picture is more patchy. Taken overall, pupils make sound progress in their learning, and their achievement, whatever their starting point, is satisfactory.

Because the school takes good care of pupils and supports and guides them well, pupils enjoy the many opportunities they are offered in and out of lessons. This is reflected in consistently above-average attendance levels. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and work hard to improve. They feel that staff listen to them and are there to help them when they need it. As one put it, 'We're in a secure environment and there are always adults to help us.' Pupils have a good understanding of, and adopt, healthy lifestyles. Participation in sporting activities is high and is reflected in the school being awarded the Sportsmark award. Pupils are very aware of those with particular needs in their school and the wider community. They support local events and national and international charities. Not only does this enhance their understanding of the wider world but, when considered alongside their above-average literacy and numeracy skills, it also means that they are well prepared for the future lives. As they move through the school, pupils gain a good understanding of a range of cultures and religions, a strong feature of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships, good behaviour and well-organised classrooms are strong features of most of the lessons seen by inspectors. As a result, lessons run smoothly and teachers are usually able to concentrate on helping pupils to learn without distraction. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. However, across the school, there are inconsistencies that mean that

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

pupils' progress varies. The planning is usually clear about what pupils are expected to learn and how their success will be judged. In most cases, there is an indication of how the work will be modified to meet pupils' differing needs, although teachers' success in translating these intentions into carefully focused activities is mixed. This means that pupils of different abilities sometimes embark on similar work, which slows their progress. In the most successful lessons, expectations are high and there is a strong emphasis on checking on pupils' understanding during lessons. In a good English lesson in Year 6, because they were given precise feedback, more-able pupils had a clear understanding of the levels at which they were working and what they had to do to reach the next level. In other good lessons, teachers kept a close check on pupils' understanding as the lesson progressed, so they were able to identify and deal with any misunderstandings as they arose. In some lessons, this ongoing assessment is not so sharply focused, so that, for example, those who need extra help or who are ready to move on to the next step are not recognised quickly enough, and their progress slows.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Steps are being taken to make it more challenging, relevant and exciting by linking subjects together more systematically. A particular strength is the good promotion of pupils' personal, social and health education, although the school has rightly identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore for themselves. The work so far has already had a positive impact on the progress made by older pupils. The provision for pupils in the ARP has been reviewed and improved, and their progress is accelerating because their needs are being met more closely. Many of these pupils are making good progress towards their specific targets. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by a good range of activities to enrich pupils' experience in and out of lessons, and music and sport and particularly strong. French is taught across the school, and this contributes to pupils' good cultural awareness. The school has recognised, rightly, that there is scope to improve the use of computers and other technology to support learning across other subjects.

The school takes good account of pupils' health and safety, and assesses the risk of activities conscientiously. Staff receive suitable training in safeguarding and child protection. Every step is taken to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils receive the support they need, and teaching assistants contribute well to the provision for these pupils, those in the ARP, and pupils with learning difficulties across the school. Support in lessons is effective, although there are times when this additional support is not fully utilised at the start of lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work together well. They lead the school diligently and place a high priority on creating a school in which pupils enjoy learning, are well cared for and are fully included, regardless of background or ability. Staff share the leaders' vision for raising standards and improving the school's provision. Senior staff keep a close check on the work in lessons and in pupils' books, and they use this information to identify accurately what needs to improve. They have been particularly successful in improving provision in Years 5 and 6. Governors and senior staff now need to develop an accurate view of the provision in the rest of the school. While teaching is occasionally good in other years, it is not consistently so, and areas for development are not always pursued with sufficient rigour to eliminate the inconsistencies. Leaders recognise that their next challenge is to establish consistently good teaching and learning across the school.

Senior staff have examined thoughtfully how the school promotes community cohesion at local and national levels, and are beginning to evaluate the impact they are having on these communities and beyond. There is a strong community spirit in the school, of which pupils are justifiably proud. Pupils' have a good understanding of other cultures and are very aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Appropriate steps are taken to check on the suitability of adults to work with children; risk assessments and health and safety checks are regular. This successful promotion of pupils' health, safety and welfare has a considerable impact on their personal development. Relationships are positive, and instances of bullying or harassment are extremely rare. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported and enjoy the same opportunities as other pupils. Good links with specialist agencies enhance this provision, and have contributed to improvements in the ARP. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties report their appreciation of how the school involves them in their children's education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with skills that are typical of three-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress so that by the end of Reception, most reach the goals expected of them. They make good progress in their personal development and aspects of mathematics. Well-thought-out induction arrangements and good links with parents help children to settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery and Reception classes. They enjoy learning, join in the activities eagerly, and behave well. In a successful lesson in the Nursery, the teacher used questioning skills well to develop children's counting, check on their understanding, and increase the level of challenge for those who needed it. As a result, children made good progress. Occasionally, across the setting, more could be expected of more-able children. In addition, for children of all abilities, there are missed opportunities extend their vocabulary and promote the correct use of language.

Systems to secure children's health, safety and welfare are good, and all adults are suitably qualified. Recent work has improved the way that the outdoor areas are used, so that children are now able to move freely into and out of the classrooms. While this is new, there are already early signs that this is having a positive impact on children's enjoyment and progress. Staff keep detailed information about each child and use this well to plan their next steps. The use of this information to check on specific progress in each area of learning is less well developed, which makes it difficult for staff to have a detailed overview of progress and to compare different groups of children. Early Years Foundation Stage leaders ensure that the setting is safe and secure, and they identify accurately what needs to improve.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

This was an unannounced inspection, and the time available for parents to complete the questionnaire was, therefore, very short. Nevertheless, inspectors received a good response from parents. Most parents are positive about the school. In particular, they appreciate the care taken of their children, the support given to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the start their children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the good range of activities that enrich their children's learning. A few parents are unclear about homework arrangements. Inspectors found that the level of homework provided is similar to that found in most similar schools. A small number of parents feel that more could be expected of more-able pupils. Inspectors concur that the level of challenge for these pupils varies across the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Claytons Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 121 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 516 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	44	10	1

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Claytons Primary School, Bourne End, SL8 5NS

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who spoke with us to give us your views. You gave us lots of helpful information. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things it does well and some things it could do better. One of your school's main strengths is the way it takes good care of you. Lots of you told us that you feel safe and that there is an adult you could go to if you had a problem. The school is very calm and friendly. We could see how much you enjoy learning and that most of you make satisfactory progress with your work. We were impressed by your behaviour and how hard you work. In all the classes we visited, everyone listened carefully to the teachers and tried to do their best. Well done, and please keep it up!

We were pleased to see that those of you in Years 5 and 6 are doing well. You and your parents told us how much you appreciate the activities you do outside of lessons, and we agree.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on three areas.

- We want them to make sure that more lessons are good ones, so that you learn well and know how to improve.
- At the end of each year, your senior staff collect your teachers' assessments of your work. We want them to do this more often so they can keep a closer check on how you are doing.
- When your senior staff watch lessons and look at your books, they agree with your teachers about areas that can improve. We want them to check more regularly that these things are improving.

We know that you will want to help your staff by continuing to work hard, behave well and enjoy school. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Keith Williams
Lead Inspector

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