

Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112178
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325548
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	76
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Angela Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Clifton Penrith Cumbria CA10 2EG
Telephone number	01768 242152
Fax number	01768 242152

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school where all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as are those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class. There is a daily after-school club, which is run privately. This is inspected separately by Ofsted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. It has several outstanding features, comprising excellent personal development and well-being of pupils, high standards of care and an exciting and relevant curriculum. The school is very popular with an overwhelming majority of parents, who correctly identify strengths in pupils' exemplary behaviour, their active part in the school's development and the access to a wide range of curricular provision, including residential visits. Parents comment on 'excellent teaching methods', 'great leadership' and 'family atmosphere'. One wrote: 'This is a fabulous school, where staff are 100% committed to giving pupils the very best start in education, well-being, manners and discipline. I am grateful that the school is willing to go that extra mile for my children.'

When children begin Reception, their skills are slightly below those typical for their age. Pupils make good progress and test results show year-on-year improvement. When pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average but exceptionally high in English. This represents good achievement. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and are very keen to make progress in lessons. They leave with a very strong understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, much experience of holding responsibility and active participation in team and community projects, such as recycling. They understand the importance of tolerance and are aware of cultural diversity from their residential experiences, school visitors, communication and partnerships with schools abroad and at home, and the introduction of modern foreign languages.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are successful because they are based on good constructive relationships with pupils, an accurate assessment of abilities and teachers' effective skills in extending learning by sustaining interests and meeting needs. Pupils have a good understanding of the levels they reach and are clear about their targets. Marking is very constructive and pupils use teachers' advice to correct and redraft their work. This excellent strategy enhances individual learning but is not applied consistently across the school.

The vibrant curriculum motivates and excites pupils, particularly the cross-curricular themes, which are fully enriched by relevant visits and visitors. The teaching of basic skills is appropriately adapted with the use of extra support programmes to ensure good progress by all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able, gifted and talented. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for each individual. Everything possible is done to keep pupils happy, safe and secure. The purchase of additional land has given them access to a very stimulating play area and, although the school has limited space with no school hall, it is so well run that problems are effectively minimised.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and have enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection. They have raised standards and achievement, promoted an excellent standard of welfare and responded well to the needs of the community. The curriculum has been reinvigorated to motivate pupils, communicate higher expectations and be more relevant to individual needs. The headteacher has set very clear direction for such improvements and has effectively monitored all aspects of school life to ensure effective pathways towards high achievement. She has successfully taken many additional responsibilities during recent periods of staff absence, including subject monitoring. The leadership team rightly intends to use new staffing and general restructuring to develop the role of subject coordinators. This is even more urgent as the school is oversubscribed and currently considering providing Nursery education. A more equitable division

of responsibilities would release the headteacher to manage such developments and give staff a better overview of the school's provision. The school has good capacity for further progress and currently provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although children enter Reception from different settings, they settle quickly because they join a warm, caring unit, where staff work well together. The unit is well led and managed. It provides a stimulating environment, both indoors and out. Staff promote excellent standards of welfare by careful safeguarding and exemplary health and safety procedures. Staff give frequent prompts to children throughout the day about safety, such as washing hands and sun protection. Children's personal development is given priority from entry, and is exceptional because of well-established routines, insistence on courtesy and consideration and much experience of working with others. Children develop confidence from friendships with Year 1 children in the class and opportunities to meet all other age groups at lunch and play. Standards on entry to Reception are slightly below those typical for this age group. Due to good and often outstanding teaching, children progress well and the majority reach expected levels for five-year-olds in language and number on entry to Year 1. In all other areas they exceed expectations. Phonics and other basic skills are well taught and developed. Occasionally opportunities for further consolidation are missed when the content of teacher-led sessions is not developed through children's independent activities. Staff are particularly effective working alongside children, listening to their comments and intervening to consolidate language and understanding. They are also successful in promoting children's independence by encouraging them to express their opinions, take on responsibilities and work on individual tasks.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further by developing the effectiveness of subject coordinators.
- Extend the effective practice of pupils' correcting and redrafting work using teachers' marking and guidance, so that the strategy is used consistently throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or difficulties; standards are above average. Test results at Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved since 2006. In 2008, Key Stage 1 standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. As starting points in Reception were slightly below those typical for children of this age, these pupils achieved well. In the current Year 2, overall standards are above average; reading skills are exceptionally high, writing is typical of the age group and mathematics is above expected levels. This particular group of children entered school with slightly higher starting points and are benefiting from the raised expectations within a mixed-age class.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. The 2008 Year 6 English results were exceptionally high, but lower in mathematics and science. Currently, pupils are making good progress. Mathematics and science have improved to reach above nationally expected standards, with English still exceptionally high. Much has been done to raise standards in mathematics and science by staff training, especially working with number, as well as the use of local authority consultants and the introduction of new policies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils embrace the features of a healthy lifestyle. There is a big take-up of healthy school meals and the school has launched its own cook book. Pupils drink plenty of water and engage in a wide variety of sports. After-school provision has led many pupils to take up independent hobbies. Pupils feel safe in school; they learn how to keep themselves safe and appreciate that staff are vigilant and very approachable. They value their many school friends. Pupils in all classes experience responsibility and take it seriously. There is a strong community atmosphere; older pupils enjoy helping younger ones and 'buddy' roles are very popular. Active involvement in school fairs, church festivals and other village events develops their sense of community, while raising money for charity enhances social and economic understanding. Pupils know the importance of tolerance and are very aware of diversity from their inter-school ventures, partnership with a Workington school and learning French with native speakers of the language. Visits to London, Edinburgh and outdoor pursuits centres widen their horizons and they communicate very effectively with the wider world through special events, such as 'world maths day'. Pupils enjoy school very much and this is shown in their good attendance, excellent behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils leave for secondary education confidently and with effective basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because staff have very constructive relationships with pupils, who learn in a very supportive atmosphere. Staff are well organised. Behaviour management is excellent and no time is wasted. Pupils make good progress in lessons because activities match individual needs and extend learning. Staff ensure all pupils receive some individual support or encouragement during the lesson and motivate them well by the use of interesting cross-curricular themes. Resources are used effectively, including the interactive whiteboard for further explanation. Very occasionally the more able pupils are not given challenging enough work early enough in the lesson. Teaching assistants provide well focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Marking is very helpful and informs pupils how to improve their work. When they respond by correcting and redrafting, their learning is extended. However, this highly effective practice is not used consistently throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has all the necessary excitement, variety and relevance to meet all pupils' needs and interests. The school rightly gives priority to basic subjects. These are well taught with suitable challenge for able, gifted and talented pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support programmes. Basic skills are also imaginatively developed in in-depth cross-curricular topics. Pupils are most enthusiastic about these, and are very competent at using information and communication technology to present their work. Homework is used very effectively to enhance research. Pupils receive an excellent education for safety, health and well-being. Visits and visitors enrich learning, and pupils experience specialist teaching in drama and dance. All have the opportunity to play a musical instrument and learn French.

Integrated arts projects culminate in public performances; further clubs and sporting opportunities are provided by secondary schools and all achievements are celebrated in assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, guidance and support are seen in the school's very high level of commitment to encouraging enjoyment and achievement. They are also evident in its successful promotion of pupils' health and safety and the exemplary care shown to them and to families experiencing difficult circumstances. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed. Health and safety are carefully managed and training for staff is regularly updated. Pupils are taught safety precautions for a variety of situations. Personal development programmes are well planned. Pupils express their feelings confidently, showing very positive outlooks. The school has an accurate and accessible progress tracker. This is used efficiently by staff to identify pupils' individual needs and to assess the effectiveness of teaching. It is also used successfully to set group and individual targets and to keep pupils and their parents informed of successes and routes to further progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The dynamic, hard working headteacher communicates clear direction to raise pupils' achievement and the drive needed to achieve this, despite limitations of the building and staffing instability. By effective monitoring of teaching and learning, the tracking of pupils' progress and continuous professional development, the headteacher and staff have successfully raised pupils' achievement and expectations for further improvement. Staff share the vision for taking the school forward and work very well together. Their expertise has been successfully harnessed for the good of the school. Governance is good. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and effectively add to the school's self-evaluation. They use finance very well to make time for the headteacher to monitor the school's performance and ensure an excellent standard of care. The leadership team recognises further development of subject coordinators is necessary to raise standards further. The leadership team have made good improvements since the last inspection. The building has been much enhanced, and community cohesion well promoted. The school is a focus of the community and its pupils are active in many local projects and inter-school events. Links with socially diverse schools and communities have been strengthened, both globally and nationally.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clifton Primary School, Cumbria, CA10 2EG

Thank you for the kind welcome you gave me during the recent inspection. You are rightly proud of your school and your achievements in it. I was very interested to read the many comments made by your parents and carers. The vast majority were very complimentary about the school and all the opportunities you receive. Please thank your parents and carers on my behalf.

Your school is a good one. It is improving and has several outstanding features. These include your excellent personal development and well-being, the high quality of care you receive, and exciting learning opportunities. Your behaviour is outstanding. This is shown in your consideration of others, your good attendance and your very positive attitudes to learning. The school does everything it can to keep you happy, safe and secure. You all know what you can do well and what your targets are. You have very good relationships with your teachers and make good progress in lessons. Teaching and learning are good. The staff devise some imaginative activities, which meet your needs and capture your interests. I know you enjoy your topics. I was most impressed with your knowledge and research, and enjoyed hearing about ancient Egypt and Rome. Your presentation slides were very interesting. Your computer skills are well developed and I was pleased to find that you conduct research at home. Your school is well led and managed, but I have asked it to do two things to help you make more progress.

- Develop the staff as subject leaders so that they can help you to raise your standards further. They could observe teaching, scrutinise your work and progress and identify ways of making subjects more successful. They will then know how things are developing in all classes, not just the one in which they teach.
- Ensure you all benefit equally from teachers' marking and guidance in redrafting and correcting your work. This is already happening in some classes.

Your school's leadership team are keen to make further progress and have done very well since the last inspection. Have a lovely summer holiday. My very best wishes go to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

Joan Elton

Lead inspector