

Claremont Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118456
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326830
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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)	433
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	Deborah Bruce
Headteacher	Richard Sutton-Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Banner Farm Road Tunbridge Wells TN2 5EB
Telephone number	01892 531395
Fax number	01892 520185

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated:

- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well learners are helped to make progress in writing and science
- innovation in the curriculum.

The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including its self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is much bigger than average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Only a relatively small proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of these, the largest group of pupils receive support with their speech, language and communication.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Claremont is an outstanding school. Pupils throughout the school are very conscious of the school's motto: 'Let every light shine'. Pupils explain that this means that 'everyone has a talent; every single one of us', and they readily point to the many examples of how the school has helped each of them because staff 'never give up on anyone'. Excellent care, guidance and support meet all legal requirements for pupils' welfare and ensure that pupils feel very safe and learn how to keep safe. Pupils describe having 'targets in almost everything' which, they say, 'helps us to make our work better'.

The overwhelming majority of parents also voice exceptionally favourable views of the school and all that it provides. As one explained, 'I think Claremont is an excellent school providing a fantastic environment in which all children are encouraged to reach their full potential.' This widely shared view is reflected in the exceptionally high standards that pupils attain in both their Year 2 assessments and the national tests that they take at the end of Year 6. These standards represent outstanding achievement overall for pupils of all abilities, even taking account of children's above average starting point when they start in the Reception Year. In English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in the national tests is more than twice the figure seen nationally. This shows the success the school has had since the last inspection, particularly in raising standards in writing. Standards in science are high, but they do not represent quite the same exceptional achievement seen in English and mathematics. This is because there has been an overreliance in some classes on relatively unchallenging science worksheets. There have been revisions this year to the science curriculum to give pupils more practical work, but opportunities are not always taken to link science to other subjects such as literacy. Where this is done well, as it was during a Year 4 lesson linking work on adjectives with the class's recent work on the characteristics of materials, pupils make rapid progress in both areas of learning.

Although there is scope for further developing the links between some subjects, the curriculum is nonetheless outstanding. It caters exceptionally well for pupils' wide-ranging interests and helps them to develop their different individual talents, drawing well on partnerships with outside agencies and other institutions such as local grammar schools to provide stimulating activities for the school's gifted pupils. Very high quality support is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A parent described how the support for her son's additional learning needs 'has made a huge difference to his development'. Another wrote to say, 'My child now believes in himself and has a confidence that was not there before.' The school's Artsmark attests to the strength of creative subjects and the high standard of work in art. Music is also given prominence. Around half the pupils took part in the recent music concert, either as singers or instrumentalists. A parent explained that, 'At Claremont, there is always something different going on that makes the children's school experience rewarding and memorable.' A very high proportion of pupils participate in the exceptional range of clubs on offer. These appeal to a diverse range of interests that extend to fencing and belly dancing in addition to the more usual team sports. These, and the pupils' considerable expertise on the need for a healthy diet, have helped to earn Claremont its Healthy School award. Other interests and talents catered for include dance, drama, debate and movie making.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Pupils describe how teachers ensure that 'everything is made fun, so it is easier to learn'. Pupils make very good progress in lessons because work is usually matched carefully to their different capabilities, with very well tailored extra support

provided for those who need it. Teachers' expectations are high, and pupils respond to the challenge with considerable enthusiasm. Pupils listen attentively, to their teachers and to each other. Teachers set out at the start of lessons what it is they are expected to learn and pupils are increasingly involved in evaluating for themselves the progress that they have made. Parents greatly appreciate that, 'The very high teaching standards help children to make excellent progress.' They also appreciate the way the school encourages pupils to take responsibility so that they become mature young people. Older pupils look out for younger ones. Every pupil in Year 6 takes on a position of responsibility within the school community, for example as a sports leader, charity leader or prefect. Many are actively engaged in ecology projects as part of Claremont's commitment to be a Sustainable School. Pupils are especially proud of their involvement in creating a woodland trail and in helping to secure Claremont's impressive array of solar energy panels. Pupils' outstanding personal development is also reflected in their exemplary behaviour and in their caring attitudes to each other and to those less fortunate than themselves. They throw themselves with enthusiasm into fundraising activities for national and international charities, raising more than £500 for Comic Relief shortly before the inspection. Activities such as these, coupled with the excellent progress they make in their key literacy and numeracy skills, prepare pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for future life. Pupils enjoy learning about other cultures, beliefs and ways of life, visiting several different places of worship and taking part in links with schools as far afield as Uganda, Australia and East Sussex. Special themed days, such as Zulu Day, with visiting performers from Africa, and Grandparents' Day, when members of the older generation come in to school to talk to children about their experiences, all help to further enrich the curriculum and broaden pupils' interaction with the wider community. Pupils' attendance is excellent.

The high quality of provision at Claremont is due to its outstanding leadership and management. Leaders are rigorous in their monitoring of lessons and pupils' progress. This has given them a highly accurate picture of how well the school is doing and has enabled them to continue to drive through improvements. Parents strongly recognise this. One wrote, 'The headteacher's leadership has been the driving force in transforming this school from a good school to an outstanding one, in which every child is encouraged to "have a go" and is rewarded for their effort.' Claremont's capacity to continue to improve is excellent. Despite the school's popularity and its many successes, there is no hint of complacency from the headteacher, leadership team or its very actively involved governors. A parent pointed to the fact that, 'The school has been prepared to try new ideas and improvements, even though previous methods were more than adequate.' Another very satisfied parent commented, 'We thought this school was very good when our first child started some years ago, but it just gets better and better!'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents are very happy with the Early Years Foundation Stage and commend the school for its excellent induction and transition arrangements. One explained, 'We thought settling in took longer than required, but now we can see the benefits. All of a sudden, my son can read and write, and, above all that, he is happy. It is obvious that the school knows what it is doing!' Children join the Reception Year with skills and abilities above the levels normally expected for their ages. As a result of outstanding provision and careful tracking of their progress, children achieve exceptionally well, so that, by the end of the Reception Year, the great majority of children exceed the expected early learning goals. The provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well run and children are looked after exceedingly well. Their behaviour is

excellent, and the calm start to the day and the routines that the children undertake independently, such as self-registration, help greatly to develop their social skills and sense of responsibility. Parents are actively involved in helping their children to learn, both within school and through 'special books' that enable them to support children's learning at home while providing a means of clear communication between home and school. The children work collaboratively and share books and other resources happily. A mix of direct teaching and child-initiated activities are available throughout the day. However, opportunities for children to freely choose activities are limited by the small outdoor space. Outdoor activities are timetabled, therefore, so that each class is able to have the same amount of access.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work in science always offers the same consistently high challenge seen in other subjects and that pupils have the opportunity to reinforce and apply what they learn in science through links with other subjects.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

28 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Claremont Primary School, Tunbridge Wells TN2 5EB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. You and your parents are justifiably proud of Claremont. It is an outstanding school. It is exceedingly well run. It takes excellent care of you, and the first-rate teaching helps you to make exceptionally good progress from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6.

What confident young people you are. We were impressed with how very well behaved you all are and how enthusiastic you are in lessons. It was also very good to see such excellent attendance. Your happy, smiling faces showed us how much you all enjoy school. You particularly enjoy all the interesting and exciting things you get to do at Claremont, including the eco projects and the super range of clubs. I was sorry I did not get the chance to visit some of them and to listen to more of the wonderful singing and instrumentalism that I heard in assembly. Several of you told us about all the targets you have that are helping you to make your work even better. I hope that you will carry on working as hard as you can and do your very best to achieve your targets so that you continue to succeed at Claremont and when you move on to your next schools.

Thanks to your own and the school's hard work, the standards that you achieve are very high. However, you have not been making quite such fast progress in science as in English and mathematics. I have therefore asked the school to make sure that you are always given challenging work in science and that you have more opportunities to link your work in science with other subjects, like literacy.

Best wishes for the future, and good luck with this year's vegetable crop!

Yours faithfully, Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector