

Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119291
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326993
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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)	229
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	Mr Kevan Waby
Headteacher	Mr Paul Slater
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Clitheroe Road Lytham St Annes Lancashire FY8 3PY
Telephone number	01253 727664
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is average in size. Almost all pupils are of White British origin, with very few whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils able to claim free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the school has an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school also has a higher than average proportion of pupils in the care of the local authority.

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 school with several outstanding features. The school is exceptionally well thought of in the community, a view shared by the overwhelming majority of parents. One parent encapsulated the views of many by commenting, 'Clifton is a great school and offers a caring and lively learning environment in which my daughter has flourished and grown in confidence and ability'.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils are friendly, polite and easy to talk to. Every moment is busy and pupils thoroughly enjoy school. It is not surprising that attendance is above average. Behaviour is exemplary as are pupils' attitudes to learning. Relationships are excellent throughout the school reflecting the value of mutual respect. Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school deserves its local reputation as a very caring school. Pupils often travel considerable distances so that they can be educated in this very warm and supportive community. Pupils who have specific issues are extremely well looked after with great attention given to their individual needs. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good.

The inspirational headteacher has made a very positive contribution to the school's improvement. He has maintained a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, raising the expectations of pupils and creating a common sense of purpose. With good support from all his colleagues, the whole staff team has worked together successfully to strengthen provision and outcomes for pupils. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is good and standards are above average. Progress is good except for the more able pupils in mathematics, who do not always make enough progress. The improved tracking of pupils' progress and the more effective way support is targeted to identified needs, have contributed greatly to rising standards. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In most classes, pupils make good progress because activities challenge pupils to achieve well and teachers' expectations are high. Sometimes, too much time is provided for pupils to complete tasks and the pace of learning slows. Regular marking and written advice are usually helpful in showing pupils how to improve their work, but there is some inconsistency in their use across the school. The good curriculum supports learning well. Recent improvements, especially in enrichment, and the focus on enjoyment, help pupils to appreciate and benefit from the valuable experiences the school offers them.

This is a successful school because it is well led and managed and has good capacity for further improvement. Governors have very good links with the school and they have contributed significantly to the strong team effort that has strengthened provision and outcomes for pupils. Systems of self-evaluation are good. Senior leaders are rightly aware that the school development plan lacks sufficient clarity in order for them to be absolutely sure that its proposed actions are being successful.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are taught in a Reception class and a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class. They enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their days are carefully planned. Procedures for safeguarding children meet requirements and staff are knowledgeable about children's individual needs. As a result, they feel safe and secure. Parents appreciate the

attention given to their children's welfare and also the opportunities to be involved with their education. Children start school with a broad range of skills and experiences that are typical for their age. Progress is satisfactory overall, and children leave Reception with average standards. The strong emphasis on personal development accelerates learning and standards in this aspect. In the past, standards in knowledge and understanding have been lower than other aspects. This is improving in response to a richer range of experiences. Teaching is satisfactory with good features, especially in the focus on enjoyment and learning through practical activities. Currently, teachers are confident when leading a group session when they have planned the outcomes. In free choice activities, however, teachers do not intervene sufficiently to extend learning. This practice is yet to be fully established, especially in creating links between the two classes to ensure their experiences are similar. The outdoor space is small and lacking in stimulation, and this inhibits its use to extend learning. Leadership is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good but information is not being used well to identify priorities in the action plan. Leaders do not monitor the full range of provision closely enough. As a result, provision is not consistent for all Reception children. All the required new national changes are in place, especially concerning children's welfare.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend provision for learning outdoors in the Early Years Foundation Stage and ensure consistency in the curriculum provided in the Reception class and the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 class.
- Raise standards in mathematics ensuring that the more able achieve in line with their capabilities.
- Improve the clarity of the school development plan and make it apparent when the objectives to raise standards have been successfully met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children's skills are broadly typical for their age when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When pupils begin Year 1, their performance levels are average. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 and current standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on previous teacher assessments and has been brought about by strong teaching and high expectations.

The unvalidated 2008 results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, show that standards were average in English, mathematics and science. Overall, achievement for these pupils was satisfactory and the school identified some early underachievement linked to weaker teaching. Better teaching, rigorous tracking of progress, and a whole-school focus on writing are ensuring that standards are rising. Pupils now make good progress and current standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The more able pupils do well in English and science but do not always make as much progress as possible in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils with a statement of special educational need progress well towards their learning targets. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those in the care of the local authority are very well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is an extremely happy school and pupils say this is because of the many friends they have. This is very evident at lunchtime when pupils enjoy playing well together and all are included in the many activities. Their energetic games show a very clear understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. This is also evident in their wise choice of healthy food and their empty plates. Pupils say they feel safe and there is no bullying, but if there was, they know who to turn to for support.

Older pupils are extremely confident when working independently because teachers provide opportunities for choice and collaboration. For example, Year 5 pupils were told 'I expect you to work independently and to be at your task in 20 seconds.' The response was instant as all pupils settled promptly to work. Pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), together with excellent social skills, prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Singing in the whole school assembly is of very high quality and brings a spiritual element to these occasions. Pupils are very polite and go out of their way to be courteous and polite to each other and visitors. Behaviour is excellent and boosted by pupils' strong sense of personal responsibility in the school community and local communities. The school council has a real voice in school and has contributed to additional resources including the outdoor clock so pupils know when break-times finish. It also leads an annual Anti-bullying Day. Pupils are very knowledgeable about their own culture as well as respecting the traditions and beliefs of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good; it ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. A strength in all lessons is the very good relationships between pupils and adults leading to calm and orderly lessons. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and set activities which provide a high level of challenge. Many lessons include a variety of approaches and effective use of the interactive whiteboard adds to pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils also achieve well when teachers encourage them to learn independently from real-life situations, for example, by visiting local shops to calculate the total cost of a number of items. The pace of learning slows when too much time is given to pupils to complete tasks. This is particularly the case for more able pupils in mathematics. Teaching assistants provide pupils with a good level of support during group activities but are not always well deployed during whole-class activities. Teachers' marking is particularly effective when pupils receive detailed guidance about the steps they need to take to improve their work. However, this good practice is not yet fully consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A contributory factor to the rising standards is the improvement in the curriculum. The focus on encouraging pupils to be independent learners is making learning more purposeful for pupils. Currently, teaching in mathematics is linked to real-life situations. This is starting to raise pupils'

enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils look forward to special events like the 'Wow! Science Day' that includes amazing activities that get to the heart of what scientific investigation is all about. The vast array of certificates on display fully reflects the richness of pupils' experiences and show great success in many areas.

A good balance has been sustained between academic, physical and creative experiences. Music is a real strength as reflected in pupils' amazing singing. The school's philosophy of including all is evident in the headteacher's belief that playing and taking part are all important. This emphasis on inclusion can also be seen in a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Close links with the local secondary school provide well for those identified as gifted or talented.

The range and variety of extra-curricular activities have been greatly enhanced since the previous inspection. Clubs and activities are varied and well attended. The school allotment is well tended and visits are exciting and purposeful. To see Year 3 setting off to a local historical centre in their Viking outfits, led by adults in costume, was clear evidence of how these visits are carefully planned to exploit the occasion and ensure enjoyment and excitement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because the school invests greatly in every individual pupil. Parents and pupils are unanimous in their appreciation. The sensory room is a valuable asset, allowing pupils to have high quality time to relax, 'chill out' and receive sensitive support and encouragement. All safeguarding procedures are in place. Training in child protection for all staff and governors takes place each year. Close links with external agencies ensure expert advice is sought and acted upon as the need arises.

Academic tracking is good. Regular assessments in literacy and numeracy are carefully monitored by staff. Each term, the headteacher discusses pupils' progress with staff and interventions are put in place when a pupil is identified as not making enough progress. Pupils have individual targets in literacy and mathematics. Through a variety of approaches, such as advice cards for bookmarks, pupils are kept aware of how they can improve their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has had much to do since the last inspection, especially with regard to the quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum. The inspirational leadership skills of the headteacher have succeeded in giving the school a clear direction and a determination to improve. The headteacher displays obvious warmth towards children and he is the embodiment of the school's mission statement, 'Bringing Out the Best in Each and Every Child'. All adults, including parents, have found this infectious and the school now operates with a very strong team spirit. This has had a major impact on improving standards.

The knowledgeable governing body is organised well and fully involved in decision-making and evaluation. All governors contribute to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Leaders respond promptly to identified weaknesses. However, the school's development plan does not set out clear success criteria, making it difficult to know how successful improvements have been in raising standards.

Community cohesion is good because the school has clear plans and appreciates the need to promote links at a local and global level. Pupils engage well with the local and wider community. For example, pupils work alongside members of the nearby Allotment Society and collaborated with borough councillors on a local park project. This is a fully inclusive school and is especially welcoming towards pupils with different needs. This reflects the school's strong determination to meet the needs of all.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. For example teaching and the curriculum are now good. The implementation of a rigorous system for the regular tracking of the progress of every pupil has been instrumental in raising standards. The school offers good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

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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?	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?	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?	2
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**

24 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clifton Primary School, Lancashire, FY8 3PY

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You were very polite, courteous and helpful. We enjoyed talking with you, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. We were impressed by your exemplary behaviour, your very positive attitudes to learning and how kind you were to each other. You really enjoy coming to school and your attendance is good because you enjoy your lessons and like your teachers.

Clifton Primary is a good school with several outstanding features. We were pleased to see how hard you work to achieve the good progress you make. Part of the good teaching we saw is the way teachers set you challenging targets and help you to achieve them by giving you the right help at the right time. This includes marking your work and telling you exactly what it is you must do to improve.

The way staff care for you is outstanding and this makes you feel safe and makes sure that there are adults to turn to if you have any worries or concerns. The school listens very carefully to your views and you are able to improve your school by presenting ideas through the school council. The way you are valued by the school enables you to make outstanding progress in your personal development and this prepares you particularly well for the next stage of your education.

The leaders of the school are determined to make the school even better and we have asked them to do three things to improve it.

- Ensure that the more able of you do better in mathematics.
- Write a clear plan of the things that need improving in your school and say how everyone will know that the plan has been successful.
- Extend the facilities for learning outdoors for the youngest children and make sure that the Reception class and the mixed Reception/Year 1 class follow the same programmes for learning.

I am sure that you will continue to do your best for yourselves and the school. Good luck and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Jennie Platt, Additional inspector