

Cliffe Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121529
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327506
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	93
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Hopkins
Headteacher	Mr M Sibley
Date of previous school inspection	April 2006
School address	Main Street Cliffe Selby North Yorkshire YO8 6NN
Telephone number	01757 638426
Fax number	01757 638426
Email address	headteacher@cliffe.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with the staff, the chair of governors and two groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including safeguarding information, the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress, the work pupils were doing in their books, the school's records of lesson observations, the school development plan and the questionnaires returned by 38 parents/carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- attainment, progress and learning for all groups of pupils
- how effectively the school monitors and evaluates pupil performance to improve outcomes
- pupils' attendance
- how effectively teaching is challenging all pupils and helping them to learn
- the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this very small school come from the village of Cliffe and the surrounding rural area. Almost all come from White British families and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. Relatively few pupils in the school have a learning difficulty and/or disability although there are more in some year groups than others.

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception Year in the academic year in which they are five. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Class 1 currently provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although depending on group sizes, it may provide for a mix of Early Years Foundation Stage children and Year 1 pupils. Class 2 currently provides for pupils in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2); class 3 provides for lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) and class 4 provides for pupils in upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6). The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the Activemark and the Inclusion Quality Mark. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school which fully lives up to its mission to provide all its pupils with a 'firm foundation for life'. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic and dedicated staff led by an outstanding headteacher provide a high quality, well-rounded educational experience and an exemplary standard of support, care and guidance for all pupils. As one parent explained, 'Every child is treated as if they are the only one in the school and their needs are met in all areas.' Pupils flourish in this warm, welcoming and vibrant environment, feeling safe and secure in the knowledge that there is always someone they can go to should a problem arise.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. Assessment is rigorous and used very effectively to identify those pupils who require either more support or more challenge. Pupils' overall achievement is good: they make good and often outstanding progress in lessons, and consistently attain above average standards by the time they leave school. Attendance data for the last academic year indicates that around one third of pupils took authorised leave in term time. This relatively high proportion has reduced the school's overall attendance rate so that it is only broadly satisfactory. More importantly, such periods of absence in term time effectively limit the extent to which these pupils can take full advantage of all the opportunities the school has to offer, and impedes the progress and standards of attainment some of these pupils might otherwise make.

Pupils represent shining examples of young people in their age group. They are energetic and inquisitive, exceptionally tender and caring towards each other and are extremely well behaved. Pupils have very positive attitudes to lessons and extra-curricular activities, and are not afraid to ask questions or to take appropriate risks in their learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise. Every pupil has an equal opportunity to do well and their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding; their contribution to school life is exemplary. Pupils are also learning to tolerate and respect the views and beliefs of others in school and beyond. They are developing an excellent understanding of how their community differs from others in the wider world, although the school recognises there is more to do to raise the pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in our country and has plans in place to address this.

Leadership and management are strong and effective. Self-evaluation, while modest in grading some aspects of the school's provision, accurately identifies the school's

many strengths and prioritises the right areas for improvement. Governors make a significant contribution to determining the future direction of the school, not least in making several recent shrewd and well-informed staff appointments. Further, working closely with the trustees of the Mary Waud Foundation and the 'Friends of Cliffe School', governors and the headteacher have secured significant improvements to the school's resources, most notably in the development of excellent facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) and to the extensive outside learning and play areas for all pupils. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have recently been provided with an exceptional 'outdoor classroom' equipped with a wide range of resources, creating opportunities to learn and play outside which are second to none.

The school has successfully addressed the issue for improvement identified at the last inspection. It has outstanding capacity for sustained improvement and provides excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Substantially reduce the number of term-time holidays taken so that all pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides and can achieve the highest possible standards by:
 - working closely with the local authority to determine an effective strategy
 - communicating clearly to parents/carers the negative impact that absence has on pupils' achievement.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

1

Pupils respond very well to the high standard of teaching and care they receive and pick up on all the positive qualities that the staff exude and the high expectations and aspirations that the staff have for them. As a result, they are keen and happy learners who look forward to coming to school and enjoy all it has to offer, including the good and increasing range of extra-curricular activities and residential trips and visits. Pupils' outstanding behaviour bears witness to this. The stimulus, positive experiences and challenge they are provided with enables all pupils to progress as well as they can, utilising their individual gifts and talents whatever their starting points. Pupils' achievement is good as they move through the school. Despite some fluctuations from year to year because of the small numbers involved in each year group, standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are generally above average in English, mathematics and science. This prepares pupils well for the next phase of their education and makes a strong contribution to their future economic well-being.

Pupils are rightly proud of the school and their achievements. They know that they matter as individuals and that their opinions are heard. Consequently, they feel very safe and secure and develop into well rounded young people who are very polite, lavish care and attention on each other and want to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Pupils know their individual learning targets and are provided

with good opportunities during lessons to assess their own and each other's progress and what they have learnt. They speak confidently and express mature opinions about what matters to them most about the school and why: they can use their initiative and articulate their ideas. For instance, during this inspection pupils talked about the many good things about their school including the eco-garden, 'French day', listening to and learning about the music from a different country in assembly each week, their fundraising activities, the importance of carrying out their individual roles and responsibilities to the best of their ability, and the forthcoming residential to Bewerley Park. They concluded 'you can't get much better than this, it really is a great school'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance	3
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?	1

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching is excellent and the standard is consistently high throughout the school. Classrooms are vibrant and inviting places to learn, making the best use of the available space. Pupils are active and engaged participants. This is because lessons are carefully planned to build on earlier learning, and incorporate a good variety of teaching and learning strategies. Teachers' skilful questioning and strong subject knowledge enthuses and includes all pupils. Activities match pupils' abilities well so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress and achieve well in lessons. Learning objectives and success criteria are used effectively to monitor progress and understanding. Recently introduced pupil progress meetings are held each term and are being used with increasing rigour to inform planning and identify pupils' areas of strength and learning needs, and to ensure that they are meeting or exceeding the expected levels of progress. Teaching assistants and resources are deployed effectively. Additional support is available for those who need it for whatever reason including those who are at risk of missing their targets and the more able pupils who require

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

more challenge. Pupils' work in books and displays around the school is of a high standard and there is a strong emphasis on presentation, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Marking is good overall and consistent throughout the school. It incorporates ways to reward pupils for their success and more often than not provides clear guidance about what they can do to improve their work further.

The school provides a rich curriculum which broadens pupils' experiences and makes a significant contribution to their personal, social and emotional development as well as their academic attainment. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including plenty of sporting activities as well as dance and drama, is much appreciated by pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants know each individual pupil and their families very well. Levels of support and care provided for pupils are exemplary. Liaison with external agencies, and the involvement of parents as and when appropriate, result in well-targeted actions to ensure that pupils receive whatever care or extra help is needed. A parent commented how the staff 'have been brilliant, they have really worked with us, the teacher has been fantastic and the school has bent over backwards to help and implement the actions recommended' by an external professional.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are strong and effective. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and vision. All of the staff and governors contribute to this and are committed to providing the very best educational opportunities and standards of care to ensure that pupils flourish. Effective work to promote equalities is illustrated by the way pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in the life of the school and the good progress they make as a result. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good.

Staff at all levels fulfil their roles effectively and enthusiastically; they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of those areas it should improve because these areas are included effectively into the self-assessment process. Resources are deployed effectively. The staff form a strong and cohesive team, benefit from a good range of professional development and training opportunities, and are eager to develop their skills and abilities further. Scrutiny of the standards of pupils' work and lesson observations are conducted regularly. Assessment of pupils' progress is rigorous and comprehensive and routinely undertaken. The school consistently exceeds the challenging targets it sets itself. Planning is well considered and carefully implemented. Actions are regularly monitored and evaluated. Planning and management information is being used

consistently throughout the school because it is well-organised, readily understood and its benefits are tangible. Its impact is seen in the outstanding outcomes for pupils and for the school through its deservedly good and growing local reputation. Safeguarding procedures have been strengthened considerably in the last year. They meet current requirements and are regularly updated. Risk assessments and health and safety audits are robust and the subject of regular review.

Very active and well-informed governors make a good contribution to the work of the school through their support and challenge. They take their responsibilities seriously and give of their professional skills and knowledge willingly, including specialist financial and health and safety expertise. Plans are in place to develop links with the school council further and to hear the views of pupils more regularly. Governors and trustees have secured exceptionally spacious grounds, and this extremely well equipped and beautifully maintained school will be enjoyed by generations of children to come.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception Year with skills that generally match those expected for their age. They receive a good start to their education and develop very positive attitudes to learning because of the good quality of provision and highly effective teaching and learning opportunities. Children settle in quickly and enjoy the wide range of independent and adult-led activities on offer. Displays and activities such as the 'Cliffe café' and the role-play stage are prepared to a very high standard and encourage the development of communication, basic numeracy and social skills. Staff have high expectations and expertly plan for the children's individual learning needs. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are supported well and make very good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills, including their personal development. As a result, all meet and many exceed the early learning goals expected of them by the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Assessment, observation and recording of children's learning are thorough and leads

to an accurate view of each child's skills and understanding in each area of learning. This results in careful day-to-day planning of activities to match children's abilities. However, strategies to monitor the effectiveness of provision and use this information when analysing fluctuations in outcomes for groups of children are not currently as well embedded in the Reception Year as they are in the rest of the school. An Early Years coordinator has recently been appointed to address this and to secure a constant drive towards further improvement.

A significant and positive feature of the provision, which benefits children enormously, is the spacious 'outdoor classroom' and the wealth of resources on offer to extend children's learning and play which is exceptional. However, at present the outdoor area cannot be used to maximum benefit throughout the full school day because current resources do not stretch to the two adults needed to facilitate this.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses were received from 54% of parents/carers and a very large majority of these were overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. Many parents used the questionnaire to say how pleased they were with the school and to outline the contribution it made to the lives of their children and the village. Inspection findings agree with parents' views particularly in relation to the outstanding support, guidance and care that the school provides and the direction provided and improvements made by the headteacher since his appointment. Parents may wish to know that there were no particular trends in the small number of very constructive criticisms received. However, while maintaining confidentiality, the inspector discussed these with the headteacher in order that he may address them and report back to parents in due course.

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 2007/08, 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 2007/08, 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 2007/08, 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 to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007/08, 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:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cliffe Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Selby, YO8 6NN

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. It was great to meet you and hear about all that you do at school.

It was a pleasure to see you all so happy, working so very hard and making such good progress in lessons (all of which made me feel very happy too). I thoroughly enjoyed seeing you all enthusiastically and energetically taking part in the celebration assembly: you sang the hymn beautifully and I thought the words were very special and really were talking about how you all work together. It was good to hear the Turkish music and to find out that you have also learnt why we have Mothers' Day and all about St Patrick. I think you were moving on to Spanish music next, weren't you? Also, I have to tell you that you have probably the best outside learning and play space and resources I have ever seen in a primary school! I am sure that when you start visiting other schools very soon you will find out just how fortunate you are!

You told me you love coming to school and enjoy learning because there is always so much to do. I saw some great lessons where you were working at a fast pace on some challenging activities. I enjoyed my 'cup of tea' in the 'Cliffe café' while watching the younger children working together to build a new road with a big tunnel and whizzing about on trikes and scooters. I was impressed by the PE in Year 1, numeracy work in class 2, the design and technology work to create a healthy sandwich going on in class 3 and the way older pupils in class 4 supported and challenged each other to write and improve some brilliant descriptive prose. You said that in your opinion, 'you can't get much better than this, it really is a great school' and I agree with you. Your school is outstanding in most aspects of its work. It provides you with a good quality education and it cares for you exceptionally well. You respond to this very well by making good progress and achieving above average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 and by becoming mature and confident young people who have every chance of making the most of your education in your next school.

Your school is outstanding because your headteacher leads it exceptionally well and is helped in this by all of the staff, the governors, and the trustees. The teachers and teaching assistants teach you extremely well and give you activities that make learning exciting and fun. All of the staff know you very well and keep a very close eye on what you are doing. The headteacher and teachers know what you are capable of and are determined to make sure you succeed. They also provide you with plenty of trips and visits and lots of extra activities outside of lessons. They listen to what you have to say and encourage you to take part in the life of the school. I liked everything that I saw in your school except for one thing: too many of you (about a third of all pupils) are having permission to take time off in term time.

This interrupts your learning and because of this some of you are not making as much progress as you could do or reaching the standards you are capable of. I have asked the headteacher to come up with some plans to improve attendance and this includes talking to your parents/carers more about how taking time off school in term time can limit your progress and the standards you might achieve.

You are quite rightly proud of your school and all the things you achieve. You are excellent ambassadors for your school and talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about what you do. I think that you are outstanding young people who are extremely polite and well-behaved, and who respect and look after each other with great tenderness. You and your teachers make a very strong team and work hard to ensure that together every pupil in your school has 'firm foundations for life'. Good luck and all best wishes for the future. Please thank your parents for completing and returning the questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ripley
Her Majesty's Inspector

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