

Claverdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125507
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	328346
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs G Evans
Headteacher	Mrs K Gover
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 February 2006
School address	Breach Lane Claverdon Warwickshire CV35 8QA
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, chair of governors, the inclusion leader and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, school policies, the tracking of pupils' progress, minutes of the governors' meetings and just over 70 parental questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently meeting their diverse needs
- the impact of strategies to raise the standards of boys in literacy
- the extent to which there is planned and purposeful learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage both indoors and outside
- the effectiveness of the challenge and support provided by the governing body.

Information about the school

Claverdon Primary School is a smaller than average primary school. Most of the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is broadly average and there are a small number of pupils with disabilities. When children enter the Reception class, they have skill levels above those expected of four-year-olds. The school has recently won a Healthy School Award and an Active Sports Award.

A before- and after-school club, the Clover Club, uses the school premises. It is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Claverdon Primary is an effective school with outstanding features. Pupils enjoy their learning and their outstanding behaviour creates an extremely positive school ethos. Achievement is outstanding because pupils make good progress and reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching varies but is good overall. A strong feature in four excellent lessons observed was the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Activities set were challenging and demonstrated high expectations. Teachers had excellent subject knowledge and were acutely aware of how to build on the earlier experiences of pupils who struggle sometimes to retain skills and knowledge. Adults working with these pupils inspired them and took every opportunity to promote independent working. The pupils rose to the challenge and made exceptional progress. The school has a high proportion of very able pupils. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers directed probing questions that extended learning for the most able. The open-ended tasks regularly set also encourage collaboration, perseverance and creative thinking, and consequently, gifted pupils are highly motivated.

In recent years, a relative weakness has been the standards achieved by boys in writing. This has been a priority area for school improvement and staff training has explored how the use of drama, film and choice of topic can help boys enjoy writing. The attitudes of boys in literacy lessons and the quality of their work in extended writing books show that the steps taken to raise their standards have been successful.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and standards are above average in all areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Progress is no better than satisfactory because children of all abilities often receive the same learning experiences. There have been recent improvements to the indoor and outdoor environments to enable children to enjoy a wider range of experiences. However, some of the learning activities are not yet sufficiently stimulating or challenging to build on the children's many skills.

The good curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' progress, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, because it builds upon skills systematically as pupils move through the school. Subjects such as personal, social and health education contribute well to the pupils' understanding of

how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. The pupils' very high standards, including their speaking and listening skills, together with their ability to work effectively in teams mean that they are outstandingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Self-evaluation procedures are sound but evidence gathered through lesson observations and work scrutiny is quite limited. Subject leaders and governors contribute to school improvement planning. However, the present improvement plan does not focus sharply on outcomes for pupils and its implementation and impact are not rigorously monitored or evaluated. At present, school leaders do not review important policies regularly or thoroughly evaluate their impact.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage within one year by:
 - ensuring learning experiences match the range of abilities in the class and build upon what each child already knows, understands and can do
 - developing a more challenging, stimulating and exciting curriculum.
- Improve the school's capacity to improve from satisfactory to good within one year by:
 - increasing the opportunities senior leaders have to observe teaching and conduct work scrutinies so they can gather secure evidence on the quality of teaching and learning
 - ensuring improvement planning focuses on outcomes for pupils and is rigorously monitored by leaders at all levels
 - regularly reviewing all important policies and evaluating thoroughly their impact on provision and outcomes.

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

1

A focus of the inspection was the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. In seven of the lessons observed, both groups made outstanding or good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils had to find strategies for estimating someone's height from a footprint. The task engrossed all pupils. The most able quickly hit upon effective strategies and then were able to test and refine their ideas. Initially other pupils, though motivated by the task, were less confident of their ability to plan and carry out an effective investigation. Adults supporting their learning developed pupils' ideas through skilful questioning without lowering the expectation that the pupils themselves would find a solution to the problem.

Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been very high in recent years. In national tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2008, all pupils made at least the expected progress and reached the expected standards. Many did better than this. For example, the percentages of pupils reaching the highest level were 96% in science,

81% in English and 69% in mathematics. These proportions are approximately twice the national average. Pupils' enjoy their time at school. Their achievement and learning are outstanding.

Other key features of pupil outcomes include the following.

- Pupils make an effective contribution to the school and wider community through the school council, links with the local church and an impressive range of fundraising activities. However, given the maturity and ability of the pupils, there is scope for increasing the opportunities they have to initiate and lead activities.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to reflect upon spiritual and moral issues. They have good social skills, which they can use in a wide range of different contexts. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their own culture but their experience of diversity in Britain is less well developed.
- Attendance is above average for all groups of pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

Teaching typically promotes effective learning and progress because teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that meet the needs of all abilities. A particular strength is the quality of questioning and dialogue. For example, in an outstanding literacy lesson when pupils offered ideas during a shared writing session, the teacher probed their choices through carefully phrased questions that appropriately challenged pupils' different levels of understanding. These questions encouraged all of the pupils to reflect upon and understand more clearly the craft of writing effective explanations. The standard of the follow-up work was excellent. Where the quality of learning was no better than satisfactory the pace of learning dropped because teaching did not always take into account the needs of individuals

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

so well. When this happened, the expectation of what the most able pupils could achieve was too low.

The school's tracking systems enable senior leaders to monitor progress throughout the school year and quickly tackle any underachievement in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve in these subjects.

Other key features of the school's work include the following.

- The many educational visits, visitors to the school and the good range of after-school activities contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their good personal development.
- Clearly targeted support for vulnerable pupils ensures that individuals who have to overcome significant barriers to learning succeed just as well as others. Good partnerships with parents and other agencies support this aspect of the school's provision.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at different levels make a sound contribution to the drive for further improvement. The improvement in boys' writing is evidence of their ability to identify and tackle an area of weakness. However, in general the quality of important school documentation and the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of plans within this documentation are no better than satisfactory. For example, plans to build upon the school's many strengths do not focus sharply on pupil outcomes and activities taken to monitor improvements lack rigour and clear lines of accountability. Policies to promote equality and community cohesion are in place but the reviews of these policies and evaluations of their impact do not clearly indicate successes and areas for development. At the time of the inspection, procedures to ensure the appropriateness of all adults who work within the school were adequate. All other safeguarding regulations are met and the school takes care to ensure the well-being of pupils. One indication of this is the pupils' clear understanding of how to use the internet safely.

Discussions with governors demonstrated their commitment to working with the senior leadership team to improve the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the policies for which they have responsibility. Indeed, quite recently steps have been taken to strengthen their capacity to fulfil this important role. At present, they are involved in shaping the school improvement plan but because the document lacks clear and measurable targets it is difficult for governors to hold the school

rigorously to account for its work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
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	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are above the expected levels in all areas for children of this age. They are keen to learn and highly articulate. They make satisfactory progress and standards are above average in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1.

Recent improvements to the learning environment both indoors and outdoors enable children to experience a wider range of adult-led and child-selected learning. However, some of the learning activities lack challenge and excitement. For example, activities are normally set out for the children so that they are not able to select their own resources or to initiate their own play. Role-play areas provide satisfactory chances for children to develop their understanding of the wider world, but are not sufficiently inviting or interesting to extend the children's advanced social and language skills. There is a sound emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as phonics, to help children's early reading and writing skills. The highest attainers can already spell and write many words. However, the fact that all the children experience the same handwriting exercises inhibits progress for the more able and makes writing a difficult exercise for those at earlier stages of development.

Adults have a sound knowledge and understanding of the learning and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children normally behave very well but on some occasions can become boisterous when their play activities lack structure or adult intervention. Adults use a satisfactory range of teaching methods and there are adequate resources, although there is no outdoor climbing frame or wheeled vehicles to promote the children's physical development. Staff are developing their observation and assessments and they are beginning to use these in their planning to meet children's individual needs. However, in many activities, children receive the same learning and play experiences and these do not challenge older and more able children or consistently meet the needs of others. Recently introduced learning journals provide a useful record of children's activities for parents. Policies and procedures are adequate as staff become increasingly

familiar with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are good relationships and partnerships with parents and pre-school settings so children have a smooth and happy start to school.

There have recently been considerable improvements to the planning and organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The relocation of the Reception classroom to enable children to have easy access to an outdoor area is further evidence that the awareness of best practice is developing. The headteacher is working in close cooperation with the Early Year Foundation Stage team and the local authority Early Years Advisor to secure further rapid improvement in provision and outcomes.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
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?	3

Views of parents and carers

Over 70 parents returned questionnaires and the great majority of responses were positive. Parents particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school and the steps it takes to ensure their safety. It is clear that parents value the contribution senior leaders make to the school's successes and recognise how well the school prepares their children for the future. It is also clear from parental questionnaires that parents appreciate how senior leaders take into account their suggestions and concerns. A small number of parents expressed the wish that the school keeps them more informed about their children's progress. This concern, and other constructive comments raised by parents, was shared with the school's headteacher.

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:	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.

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Claverdon Primary School, Claverdon, CV35 8QA

Thank you for being so helpful to us when we came to inspect your school. You gave us some very useful information when you talked to us and showed us your work. This helped us to make the judgements I am now sharing with you.

Claverdon is a good school. You are very polite, behave outstandingly well and work hard in lessons. You are learning well because your teachers and teaching assistants are often good at giving you work that provides just the right amount of challenge. In most lessons, they explain things clearly and ask questions that help you make rapid progress. Another strength is how they give you support when you need it, but always encourage you to have a go and not be worried about not getting things right straight away. In the past boys have done less well in writing than in other areas. Looking at your books it is clear now that most boys are enjoying writing and that standards are improving. Well done! Your teachers mark your work very carefully and I was very pleased to see that some of you write thoughtful comments about your work. I hope that even more of you will do this in future; it will really help your learning. I was also impressed with your good attendance and the part you play in helping to improve your school. The popularity of school meals is evidence of the positive impact of the school council. You have strong links with the local church and village. Your fundraising to help people less fortunate than yourselves, particularly the 'By Grace Orphanage' in Kenya, is a tribute to your own generosity and that of your families.

The staff care for you very well and so you enjoy school and feel safe. You all work together as a friendly community.

I have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to do a number of things that will help your school become even better:

- ensure that activities for children in the Reception class are exciting and always build upon what each child already knows, understands and can do
- write plans that clearly identify how well they expect you to achieve as a result of the actions they are taking to improve the school
- make sure that important policies are regularly checked to ensure that they are helping to make your school a better place for everyone.

You too can help improve your school by continuing to behave so well and attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley
Her Majesty's Inspector

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