

Claypool Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105195
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336444
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fran Thomas
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Hulme
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including pupils' exercise books and files, the school improvement plan, teachers' planning and monitoring information on pupils' progress and attainment. In addition, inspectors analysed 71 questionnaires returned by parents, 19 returned by staff and 113 returned by pupils.

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

- progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- the engagement of pupils in their learning
- the challenge provided during lessons, particularly for more able pupils
- the impact of school assessment strategies on raising achievement
- the extent and quality of leadership at all levels.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school which serves a mixed area of rented and private housing. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and has increased markedly in recent years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. There is very small minority of pupils from minority ethnic groups and few are new to learning English. Claypool is an accredited Healthy School and holds the Artsmark Gold and Activemark awards. The headteacher was appointed in January of this year and a new deputy headteacher took up her post in April.

The Claypool Breakfast and High Tea Club was inspected separately and receives a separate report, which is available on the Ofsted website.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school, which has good links with parents and carers and which supports and guides its pupils well. Pupils enjoy their school and their attendance is consistently above average. They behave well, are welcoming and courteous to visitors and are delighted to share their work with others.

Children settle into the Reception class quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils enter Year 1 with above average attainment. From this good starting point pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 leaving Year 6 with above average attainment. Pupils do not do as well in English as they do in mathematics and science. For example, more able pupils do not always reach the standards they should and in 2009, there was a significant decline in pupils reaching the higher national curriculum levels in English. Pupils certainly enjoy their lessons, but challenge in lessons is inconsistent; teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to work things out for themselves. In addition, pupils are not always aware of their own standards and of how to improve their work.

Visitors benefit from pupils' accurate advice on what makes a balanced diet and why regular exercise is very important! Pupils look after each other too and the 'playtime pals' do what they can to make sure that no one is lonely at break and lunchtime. Candidates for the school council speak with confidence on the hustings in assembly and members of the Eco-Committee demonstrate their concern to look after the environment. Pupils feel safe in school and have the utmost confidence in the adults who work with them. Art and music are important elements of school life and pupils' singing in assembly is a joy to hear.

Teachers are working hard to develop a creative curriculum, one in which pupils can follow their interests and develop their skills across subjects. They benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, and the variety of educational visits does much to extend their learning and put it into real-life contexts. All adults demonstrate real care for the pupils in their charge and provide very effective support for pupils who struggle with their work and for those identified as having particular needs.

Although in existence for less than a year, the impressive leadership team has an accurate view of school performance. Their strategies for improvement are already beginning to bear fruit and achievement is rising. The impact of all of their work is still to be seen but there is no doubt that they introduce new initiatives only after a comprehensive consideration of what is needed. The school has, therefore, satisfactory capacity for further improvement and it provides satisfactory value for money.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, in English by:
 - ensuring more consistency in the teaching and assessment of phonics and of guided reading across the school.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching by:
 - providing more realistic challenge in lessons, particularly for more able pupils
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn for themselves
 - ensuring that pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve their work.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy learning are satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good but, because teachers sometimes direct too much of the work, they have insufficient opportunities to research for themselves and levels of engagement suffer as a result. Pupils work well in groups when given the chance, but too often they have to listen to lengthy teacher explanations before they begin to tackle their assignments.

Over time, pupils' progress, particularly in English, is satisfactory but there has been a recent decline in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Inconsistency in the delivery and assessment of phonics and of guided reading make a significant contribution to standards in English, which are generally below those in mathematics and science. Nonetheless, attainment is above average overall and pupils' progress towards reaching their challenging targets are beginning to improve, but are still not being reached. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, demonstrates that pupils are becoming more confident in aiming for higher standards, particularly in mathematics and expressive writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers.

Pupils are proud of their school, attend well and are more than willing to take responsibility for example as school councillors, playtime pals and members of the Eco Committee; pupils are keenly aware of what constitutes a healthy diet and Year 5 grow their own vegetables which are often used in school lunches. They feel safe in school and, although some are not always happy with the behaviour of a minority of their classmates, they say that teachers and teaching assistants are approachable and are always there to help when difficulties arise. Pupils' work for charity is well known in the local area and they often initiate the fund-raising activities themselves. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and art and music are strengths. Pupils take part in dance festivals, such as the Horwich and Bolton music festivals and have

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contributed their work in local art exhibitions. Their good moral development and enviable social conscience are demonstrated by their links with the Warrington Peace Centre. Pupils' satisfactory progress in their academic work and their pleasing personal development demonstrate that they are soundly prepared for secondary education and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but there are examples of outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Relationships are a strength and teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils experiencing difficulty. The use of realistic challenge, particularly for more able pupils, is inconsistent and, too often, teaching is aimed primarily at pupils of middle and lower ability. Nonetheless, in the best practice teachers set thought-provoking assignments for their pupils. This was the case in a Year 6 literacy lesson and as a result, pupils were proud of their poems. As one wrote, "Yesterday, I saw my cloakroom come to life, it did! He quickly threw the coats around and blamed it on the kids!" Some pupils are fully aware of their current performance and of their targets for improvement.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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A significant number, however, are not sure of the levels they are reaching and of what they need to do to improve their work which holds back their progress.

The curriculum impacts well on the development of pupils' personal qualities. The school's creative introduction of research and learning logs encourage them to follow their interests when completing their homework and to see the links between subjects. The school recognises, however, that it needs to place even more emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity within today's society. Art, drama and music are strong elements of the curriculum and pupils speak highly of the bi-annual residential visit to France and of harp tuition, delivered by a talented musician among the teaching staff. There is a varied and comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visits and visitors, which extend pupils' learning experiences into real life.

Pupils and their parents speak highly of the care, guidance and support the school provides for its charges. The comment of one parent/carer typifies the views of the large majority, 'The school is a warm and welcoming environment. Pupils are valued, are treated as individuals and are well cared for.' Pastoral care is a strength and the committed team of teaching assistants works hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and to foster pupils' emotional well-being. Similarly, pupils who often find learning difficult receive impressive support and are able to take part in everything the school has to offer as a result.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The talented headteacher, supported by a hard-working and perceptive senior leadership team, leads by example and in a short time has engendered a strong sense of teamwork among staff of all levels of responsibility and experience. Both teachers and teaching assistants feel, in their words, 'Honoured to be part of the family which is Claypool primary school.' The governing body supports the school in everything it does and is holding the leadership to account with increasing rigour.

The relatively new senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders at all levels recognise that there needs to be more consistency in teaching quality and that progress and attainment, particularly in English are not high enough. Strategies for improvement, such as the creative approach to curriculum delivery, are well founded, but their impact is not yet fully apparent.

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Although the school works hard to promote equality of opportunity, it is aware that more able pupils need to be challenged more effectively in the classroom if they are to reach the standards of which they are capable.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory but it has not evaluated the impact of its work in the local area and beyond. There is a good range of partnerships with local schools, businesses and outside agencies, which benefit pupils to the full. The school takes its care for all those connected with it seriously and safeguarding and child protection arrangements are most effective and meet current national guidelines.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are broadly typical for their age. Procedures for introducing them into the Reception class are good and ensure they settle quickly and happily into their new surroundings and into everyday routines. As a result of good teaching and a wide range of practical activities which engage their interest, pupils make good progress in all areas of learning and most enter Key Stage 1 with levels above average.

Relationships are good, children enjoy their learning and are more than willing to explore for themselves. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The outdoor area is used continuously throughout the day, but it lacks a full range of good quality resources and large equipment. Children's knowledge of the wider world is extended by visits to the Blue Planet aquarium, mini-beast hunts and autumn

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walks in the school grounds.

Children behave well, play happily together and share resources readily and willingly. They grow quickly in confidence and independence as they choose their own activities and resources and tidy away afterwards. Teachers place good emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and children are delighted to show their model rockets to the rest of the class and to explain how they made them.

Leadership and management are good and staff work well as a team. Children's progress is monitored carefully and the information is used well to plan the next steps in learning. Children are safe and well cared for in a secure and attractive learning environment. Links with parents are strong. They find staff friendly and approachable and are grateful for the support and advice they receive on how they can foster their children's learning at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents believe that their sons and daughters enjoy school and the vast majority are of the opinion that it meets the individual needs of their children. As they say, 'The school is effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and it supports their emotional development well.' Although a very small minority believes the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour, the inspection team found no evidence of this and judges behaviour overall in the school to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Claypool Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	68	23	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	62	27	38	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	51	34	48	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	41	34	48	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	51	33	46	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	54	28	39	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	59	29	41	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	52	29	41	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	35	42	59	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	35	30	42	9	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	44	30	42	6	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	62	20	28	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	58	29	41	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Claypool Primary School, Bolton, BL6 6LN

The inspection team would like to thank you all for the marvellous welcome you gave us when we visited Claypool recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you, including members of the school council, who came to talk to us on Wednesday and Thursday. We were very impressed indeed with the speeches made by pupils in Year 5 during assembly, when they were telling the school about what they would do if they were elected as school councillors. Well done – talking in front of over 200 people is a nerve-wracking experience!

Claypool is a satisfactory and improving school and we know that you are very proud of it. You behave well and those of you in the older classes enjoy looking after younger pupils. You feel safe in school and you also know what makes a balanced diet and why it is so important to lead a healthy lifestyle. You receive satisfactory teaching and it is sometimes better than this. Your teachers and teaching assistants look after and care for you well and you told us that there is always someone to talk to you if you have any problems. You really enjoy the wide range of sports events and after-school clubs and we know that music and art are really important parts of your school.

Your headteacher and all the staff are so keen to make Claypool an even better school. We would like to help here, too, so we have asked them to try and help you make better progress in English and also to give you more challenge in lessons and encourage you to find more things out for yourselves. We have also asked them to give you more information on how you can improve your work. You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best at all times.

Thanks again for being so kind, friendly and polite to us. We enjoyed meeting you.

Best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Jim Kidd

Lead inspector

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