

North Clifton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122662
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340186
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Annabel Skelton
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Medley
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The lead inspector observed learning in each of the four classes, visited eight lessons and observed five teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher and senior teacher, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including tracking of pupils' progress, samples of the monitoring of teaching and learning, school planning and minutes of recent meetings of the governors. Inspectors also evaluated samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding. Questionnaires from 22 parents and carers, 25 pupils and ten staff were scrutinised.

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

- whether pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics, if boys do well enough in writing and if more-able pupils achieve as well as they can
- whether assessment information is used well enough to provide consistently challenging work for all groups of pupils
- if the work of the school is monitored and evaluated rigorously enough to identify the right areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

In this very small school, the large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. There are fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than is usual nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall, although numbers vary between years. These pupils' needs include learning and behavioural difficulties. All classes are mixed ages. This has been an exceptional year for the school community with personal and school tragedies, staff absence and new appointments within the small team. The school holds a Healthy Schools award.

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 school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is a warm and caring school where the personal development and care of the pupils are good. Pupils settle happily and most enjoy their time in school. One parent summarises the views of several that the school 'has a wonderful family atmosphere... All the teachers are warm, friendly and very approachable'.

With very low numbers of pupils, attainment varies. Children enter school each year with very different skills and abilities. As they move through the school, pupils make satisfactory progress, and some individuals achieve well. When they leave Year 6, attainment is often slightly above average. Most pupils reach the standards expected but in some year groups, not enough reach the higher levels in their work. Pupils often achieve better in reading, writing and science than in mathematics. This is because they generally do not have the skills and confidence to solve problems speedily by using mental mathematics and what they already know.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They get on well together and with the staff. Most have positive attitudes to their work, although occasionally some are quiet and do not readily join in discussions. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and of the benefits of regular exercise. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school does much to extend pupils' understanding of cultures beyond their area.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory as is the curriculum. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The staff know their charges well. There is good use of resources and pupils' work is displayed to give them pride in their learning. Assessment information is not used well enough to ensure that all groups of pupils are fully challenged, and this particularly impacts on the progress of more-able pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff work very closely together to manage issues as they arise. The closeness among leaders and staff presents both a strength and a challenge for the school. The school evaluates its effectiveness as satisfactory which matches the findings of the inspection, but the monitoring and evaluation of provision are not yet rigorous enough to identify the exact quality of what is provided and the areas for improvement. Nevertheless, with a committed team of teachers and governors, the recent involvement in several initiatives and a sound track record since the last inspection, the school shows satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they know in a range of problem-solving activities
 - improving the pupils' mental mathematics skills.
- Make full and effective use of accurate assessment information to set challenging tasks that meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities, especially the more-able.
- Extend the monitoring of teaching and other provision, and ensure activities are rigorously evaluative to identify the next steps for improvement.
- About 40% of the school's 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**

There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in writing or other skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in line with others. Most pupils reach the levels expected for their age, but not enough reach the higher levels. For example, no recent Year 2 pupils have reached above-average standards in writing, although the school provides interesting topics and reasons to write. School tracking information, lesson observations and a sample of recent work confirm that not enough pupils across the school are reaching the higher levels in mathematics. Pupils acquire a reasonable range of basic mathematical skills but often they are not able to use what they have already learned to solve other mathematical problems. This is in part because they are not confident in their recall of mental mathematics and wait for adult support. Many pupils lack confidence in explaining their workings or applying different strategies to solve two- or three-step problems. Given their satisfactory competence in basic skills and average attendance, pupils' preparation for their future is satisfactory. Attendance is close to national averages but adversely affected by a few pupils with below-average attendance. Holidays in term time disrupt learning.

Pupils say they enjoy school. Several indicated that they particularly enjoyed art and playing with their friends but none was keen on mathematics. Many pupils get pleasure from an active lifestyle, including walking and cycling to school and energetic outdoor play. The school misses opportunities to provide healthy snacks at break-time and there is more work to be done to encourage pupils to understand what is a healthy packed lunch. All pupils are members of the school council which holds discussions in weekly assemblies. Year 6 pupils take notes and exercise roles of responsibility in subsequent activities, but there are few organised opportunities to take on additional responsibilities. Staff expect pupils to become responsible citizens and contribute to the school and wider community, and most learners are keen to live up to the expectations of the adults around them. The school successfully extends pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own. During the inspection, pupils learned more about henna hand painting, and an Indian stick dance that they performed with enjoyment and good

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awareness of safety.

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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and support staff work well together to provide activities that make learning satisfactory. There are good relationships between adults and pupils. Lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. Staff make effective use of resources, including interactive whiteboards to explain and illustrate what pupils have to do. While staff plan open-ended activities for pupils to produce work at their own level, challenge is not consistently high enough to ensure all make the best possible progress. Staff miss the opportunity to ensure all pupils, especially the more able, take an active part in discussions to build their confidence in explaining what they know or need to find out. The curriculum supports pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship learning and fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The essential curriculum in most subjects is satisfactory but, in mathematics, staff too often use commercial workbooks or worksheets rather than open-ended practical activities to make work enjoyable and capture pupils' interest. Older pupils indicate they enjoy activities that

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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enrich their learning and would like more visits and after-school clubs.

Pastoral care is good and all staff play a full part in supporting the pupils. Helpful and flexible arrangements support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good practice applies in mathematics lessons where older pupils work with younger ones to receive good-quality support to meets all needs well, but, at times, further guidance is lacking for the more-able pupils.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The staff work well together as a team and share a commitment to the local community. This has been an exceptionally difficult year for the school. Staff have pulled together in times of adversity and are a supportive and caring group. A clear strength is the way in which all staff assume many roles, with part-time senior staff, in particular, effectively pointing the way to improvement. Monitoring of the work of the school in planning lessons, teaching and learning is satisfactory but not yet rigorous enough to identify all areas for further improvement. Recently, literacy and numeracy leaders have begun to extend their monitoring by working with consultants to improve provision, including in mathematics. These developments are at an early stage and it is too soon to see the impact on attainment.

The governing body has improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection. The group are well led and keen to develop their involvement and understanding further. There are good links with parents and carers and with external agencies, including other schools and the local authority. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It makes good provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities but not enough account is taken of the needs of more-able pupils. The school safeguards its pupils well with appropriate policies and procedures to support their well-being. Child protection training and checks on those who work in school meet requirements. Site safety concerns are reviewed satisfactorily. Through strong links with the local, wider and international communities the school promotes community cohesion well, although there is no formal audit of such provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and meets children's different needs well. Children attend part-time from shortly after their third birthday and then full-time as they near the age of five. They have widely varied early learning experiences, and the current group entered with skills and knowledge slightly above the expectations for their age. Their personal and social development is good and most are confident and happy children who settle well in to school routines. Their speaking skills are also good, although their early reading and writing skills are lower. They often have a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Many have lots of experiences beyond their home environment and some confidently use computers. Children's physical skills when using large apparatus are good. They climb, slide and use wheeled vehicles with confidence, although their skills at handling pencils and art materials are less developed.

Children make good progress, and when they move into the main school they have usually achieved, and often exceeded, the targets for their age. Their success is because teaching, learning and the curriculum are all good. There is an interesting range of practical activities that effectively promotes speaking and social skills, with a good balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities. Children like using the well-resourced outdoors area and gain enjoyment from using tricycles and carrying their friends as passengers. They also enjoy construction activities and, in role-play, cordon off part of the area as a building site. Leadership and management are good.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
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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 and carers think well of the school. Virtually all who responded to the inspection questionnaire think their children like school, although not all strongly agree with this statement. One parent reflects the views of others that: 'Our children really like their teacher and look forward to going to school' and that the class teacher is 'quite simply the nicest person on earth and our children want to stay in her class forever'. Parents and carers think they are well informed about their child's progress and that children are kept safe. A few indicated concerns, including about behaviour, and whether the school takes account of their opinions. Inspectors found that behaviour is good, and there is a well established open-door policy for parents and carers to air their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Clifton 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 inspection team received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 61 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	64	7	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	68	6	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	68	7	32	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)	14	64	7	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	59	9	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	64	6	27	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	59	8	36	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	68	6	27	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	73	6	27	0	0	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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Clifton Primary School, Nottinghamshire, NG23 7AP

Thank you very much for making my colleague and I welcome when we visited your school recently. I really enjoyed chatting to several of you, including some of the older ones who were good at explaining the things you like most. I also enjoyed meeting several of you in lessons, at break and lunchtime and when I attended assembly. Thank you also for the questionnaires returns some of you filled in for the inspection. These are some of the findings from the visit.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education and you are well looked after. Most of you are happy and enjoy your time in school. You behave well and enjoy physical activities and I was pleased to see how sensible you were in the Indian dance - I wish I had had time to have my hand painted too. All the adults work closely together and share their ideas happily. Your school works well with other schools and groups of people and this ensures you get any extra help you need. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage particularly enjoy themselves and have lots of interesting things to do.

To improve your school further, I have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- improve your learning of mathematics by helping you to develop the skills and confidence to solve problems
- use information from checking your progress to make sure some activities are just a little bit harder for you, especially those who learn quickly
- check even more carefully where things can be improved.

You can also help your school by making sure you offer your ideas more in discussions, thinking even more carefully about what you eat and reminding your parents and carers that taking holidays in term time makes you miss out on learning.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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