

Clifford Road Primary School

Clifford Road, Ipswich, IP4 1PJ

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although much improved and good in many year groups, achievement still varies across the school. It is weakest in Year 3, and in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers miss opportunities to develop the skills pupils learn in numeracy sessions in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good; some requires improvement and not enough is outstanding. In a few lessons, work is not matched well enough to the pupils' ability levels.
- Staff do not always have strong enough mathematical knowledge.
- Governors challenge the school well and clearly hold leaders to account for what they do. They have not yet developed a full range of ways to check directly and independently on how well the school is tackling its areas for improvement.
- The school has found it difficult to eradicate the small amount of persistent absence.

The school has the following strengths

- The considerable determination and tenacity of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have led to rising standards.
- The 'phase' leaders in charge of year groups monitor and check the work in their areas effectively and hold staff to account.
- Pupils' writing skills have been transformed; they write widely in different subjects and standards are now above average.
- Achievement is now strong throughout the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 classes.
- The work done to help pupils to think about, and reflect on, their learning has changed their attitudes significantly. The school has instilled a love of learning, and as a result pupils work hard, behave well and concentrate deeply.
- Thorough and detailed assessments give teachers a very good range of information about pupils' learning.
- Better support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has led to some making remarkable progress this year.

Information about this inspection

- Eighteen lessons or part lessons were visited, most with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. A similar number of lessons were observed on the three previous inspection monitoring visits.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and policies about how the school keeps pupils safe. The team also examined the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders, staff, governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, an officer of the local authority and the local 'leader of education'.
- Twenty one parents expressed their views through the Parent View website and their responses were examined, although there were no new entries since March 2013.

Inspection team

George Derby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Hughes

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The number of pupils is much higher than in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding provided to the school to help certain groups of pupils, is lower than most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at 'school action' is a little above average. The proportion supported at 'school action plus' or through a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of staff changes. Over the last 12 months, a small number of changes and temporary staff have affected mainly Year 3. New teachers have been appointed from September 2013, when the school will be fully staffed.
- Pupils benefit from an independently run before and after school club, which is inspected and reported on separately.
- This was the fourth inspection visit since the school went into special measures in March 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, that which requires improvement is eradicated and more is outstanding by:
 - always matching work precisely to pupils' ability levels and taking every opportunity to stretch pupils' skills, especially in their thinking, problem-solving and investigations
 - checking that all pupils are listening and paying attention in lessons, and are clear about what to do
 - ensuring that teachers in Year 3 plan and evaluate their work together and check the accuracy of their assessments, so pupils' progress is consistently good across the two classes.
- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and ensure that many more pupils make better than expected progress by:
 - giving pupils regular opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across other subjects
 - helping teachers to improve their mathematical knowledge, especially so they can help pupils to develop a higher level of skill during mathematical investigations
 - giving the subject leader more time to coach and mentor other staff to develop their skills.
- Ensure that governors monitor more first-hand and independently evaluate the school's areas for improvement, and link their planned actions specifically to the school development plan.
- Reduce the amount of persistent absence by:
 - extending the support given to families that find getting their children to school a challenge
 - working with the local authority where more stringent action is needed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery or Reception classes at a stage of development typical for their age. Along with pupils in Key Stage 1, they now make good progress. Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. Although improving, achievement is more uneven across Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 3 and in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils currently attain well in reading and very well in writing; in mathematics standards are slightly below the levels expected for pupils' age.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 is generally accelerating as a result of improved teaching in reading and particularly writing. While most pupils are making the progress expected of them in mathematics, the proportion making better progress is lower than in English. In Year 3, although much has been done to improve things, pupils' progress requires improvement because of disruptions to their learning. There have been too many changes of staff, and the staff who have stayed have had little chance to work together in a consistent way.
- A major weakness previously, and one of the main reasons the school required special measures, was pupils' poor writing skills and their lack of progress in this area. In addition, there was too much variation in the achievement of different groups, such as boys and girls. The proportion reaching or exceeding the expected level in writing has risen sharply this year. Pupils' skills by the end of Year 6 are now above those expected for their age, and they have made more progress than pupils nationally.
- Close and systematic assessment of all pupils' progress has helped to ensure that there is now little variation in the performance of the different groups of pupils. Through the systematic teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and routine handwriting and spelling lessons, boys' capability in reading and writing, in particular, has improved well.
- The recent Year 1 phonics screening check shows that these pupils have made a vast improvement in their phonic knowledge compared to last year's pupils of the same age. The Year 2 pupils retaking the assessment have also made good improvement. Pupils say they now enjoy writing and can see how what they are learning in English lessons relates to their written work in other subjects. In contrast, pupils have little opportunity to practise their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- The pupil premium funding is used particularly well to ensure that eligible pupils achieve as well as other pupils. In 2012, there was very little difference in the attainment and progress of funded pupils and others. The picture is similar this year. This is because the school is vigilant in checking the levels that these pupils reach. The half-termly tracking and assessment analysis means that any falling below the expected target are quickly supported. Recently, the school's analysis showed some variation in Year 3. Through well-chosen support, the funded pupils are now back on track and their progress is similar to that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well, and some older pupils with a statement of special educational needs in Year 6 have made remarkable progress over the last 12 months. The leader responsible for special educational needs has refocused the help and guidance provided for pupils, and skilful support by teaching assistants and the precise planning of lessons by teachers ensure that these pupils' needs are fully met.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- More teaching is now good or outstanding, although some still requires improvement and there remains some inconsistency in quality. A great improvement is in teachers' approach to helping pupils learn. Teaching is lively and activities often highly engaging. Most teachers generate an enthusiasm, passion and enjoyment for learning which increases pupils' interest and motivation.
- On a few occasions, work in lessons is not always precisely matched to pupils' skills and abilities. Sometimes teachers miss the opportunity to use pupils' ideas to probe their understanding or require them to use a higher level of skill when solving problems. In mathematical investigations, they do not always check that pupils are seeing the patterns and relationships in numbers or provide sufficient strategies to help them to be systematic in their approaches.
- Teachers take every opportunity to incorporate reading and writing activities in lessons. This has made a marked impact in the improvement of their skills. However, pupils have few opportunities to practise their mathematical or problem-solving skills in other subjects.
- Staff make good use of the school's comprehensive information about pupils' progress. They are usually thorough in the way they assess pupils' learning and provide a wide range of ways in which to do so. The questions teachers ask are often probing, to make pupils think hard and extend their learning. Occasionally, instead of checking the understanding of all pupils, teachers only accept answers to questions from a few, so any pupils who have not fully understood what to do or learn are missed.
- Leaders have left no stone unturned in improving teaching so pupils make better progress. Their approach to checking on the quality of teaching is tenacious but is also highly supportive. Teachers are provided with excellent feedback from senior staff, in particular, and practical advice on how to improve. As a result, the school is now close to meeting its challenging target of 80% good or better teaching.
- Planning is detailed, thorough and often outlines with precision what different groups of pupils in the lesson will learn. Staff are clearly focused on how well pupils are learning. This has improved the progress that pupils make because what they need to do to succeed is better understood by staff and by pupils themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- A major success of the school's work is the way pupils' attitudes to learning have changed. This has been as a result of a project developed by the local leader of education which is 'building (pupils') learning power'. Pupils are now much better learners and are highly positive about areas they have previously found difficult, such as writing. They have a greater understanding about why they need to improve their work because teachers give them clear guidance; as a result they have positive attitudes and motivation.
- Pupils think deeply about their answers and explanations, and reflect considerably on what they are learning and what they can do to improve their work. This is evident at all levels, from pupils who find learning difficult to those who are 'high fliers'. Only occasionally does concentration wane, usually because some pupils have not listened or understood what to do next.
- Pupils behave very well around the building and in lessons, and feel safe in school. They form very good relationships, are polite and speak respectfully and sensibly to each other and to adults. Exclusions are rare and few sanctions are needed to correct any minor behaviour problems that occur.

- They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is broadly average. Even so, the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent is much higher than in most schools. These are mainly pupils from families the school has found difficult to engage with. As a result, the school's family liaison officer, funded by the pupil premium money, has recently been assigned the role of offering help to the families to improve their understanding of the importance of school. It is too early to identify the impact, although practical advice is already given to families on a range of matters including behaviour and social needs. The school is also asking the local authority to take more stringent action where all efforts to improve attendance have been exhausted.

The leadership and management are good

- The skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other well and their teamwork is effective. They have a very accurate view of teaching and have done much with the local leader of education to improve teachers' skills and competencies. Their analysis of teaching is perceptive and feedback to teachers gives them clear guidance on how to improve further. Their arrangements for judging staff performance, which includes that of teachers, teaching assistants, and midday supervisors, are rigorous.
- Training has been well focused to where the school needs to improve and this has paid dividends. The school's plan for its future development is clear, with appropriate and measurable actions that are linked to the performance management of all staff and tied well into training requirements. It reveals leaders' good clarity of thinking and drive for improvement, and their perceptive and accurate self-analysis.
- Significant strides have been taken in ensuring assessment is accurate and pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing, is tracked thoroughly each half term. This has built up a comprehensive picture of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and where their strengths and weaknesses lie. As a result, teachers are using the information about the levels pupils have reached, how well they learn and their interests to plan lessons.
- Phase leaders also keep a very close eye on the progress made by pupils and immediately address any issues arising from their observations of teaching and learning. Their skills have grown considerably and they are now able to tackle issues and refocus their efforts independently when needed.
- The subject leader in charge of English has been the tenacious driving force in raising standards in reading and writing. The mathematics leader has led training to help staff focus on higher-level skills, but not enough time is currently dedicated to these activities. The school is planning to extend them in the autumn term so more staff are trained in teaching the use and application of mathematics.
- The school has maintained a rich range of varied school and extra-curricular activities which is enjoyed by pupils. It has already introduced some aspects of the new National Curriculum, such as computer programming.
- Greater accountability for the progress made by pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has led to improved support and better monitoring of the work of teaching assistants over the last 12 months. The leader responsible has a good understanding of pupils' progress, the impact of the direct support provided and the work such pupils undertake in lessons.

- The school's feedback on how parents view the school's improvement is positive. Although there are only a very small number of returns through Ofsted's Parent View, the parents who responded feel their children are happy. A few have negative views; for instance, a few think their children do not feel safe or behaviour is not good. Inspectors found that the school's safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied and procedures such as access to the building by parents and visitors are regularly reviewed, and behaviour is good.
- The local authority has provided good advice, support and training, such as through the intensive teaching programme. This has resulted in better teaching and a clearer view of what needs to be done to ensure pupils make good or better progress. In addition, the work on building the capacity of leaders has resulted in their increased confidence to decide the next steps and to review accurately performance in their areas.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors check closely on pupils' achievement, and challenge leaders accordingly.
 - They regularly check on the impact of additional funding, such as the pupil premium.
 - Governors have good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and what the school is doing to improve it.
 - They keep a close eye on the school's finances, and are highly adept at identifying any inaccurate reporting.
 - Governors have made a small number of visits to the school this year to help them find out about improvements. However, the range of direct independent evidence they collect and the opportunities they have to review it are relatively limited. They focus on specific aspects to check that are based on current school priorities, although their activities and monitoring are not yet specifically detailed in the new school development plan.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124654
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	420598

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Dyer
Headteacher	Stephen Wood
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2012
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