

Claregate Primary School

Chester Avenue, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV6 9JU

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| Inspection dates | 14–15 June 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the teachers with responsibility for subjects have worked well as a team to make sure that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers plan activities that are interesting and suitably challenging for pupils of different abilities. As a result, pupils enjoy learning.
- In 2015, overall standards at the end of Year 6 were above average. Pupils made good progress from their different starting points.
- Current pupils make good progress over time. Achievement is particularly strong in reading and mathematics.
- The gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closing quickly because of the personalised support they receive.
- The youngest children in the school have a good start to their education. Staff make sure that the children acquire the necessary skills and knowledge before they start Year 1.
- Pupils are well behaved. They are polite, confident and cheerful. They treat everyone they encounter with respect.
- Governors have been instrumental in securing the improvements in the school. They effectively hold senior leaders to account for the achievement of different groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders, staff and governors make sure that pupils are kept safe. Pupils feel safe and know how to take care of themselves around the school and in the playground.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teaching is not of the highest quality and this slows the progress that some pupils make.
- Outcomes in writing are improving, but they are not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have sufficient chances to extend their writing skills in English and across different subjects and some do not present their written work neatly.
- The attendance of a few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability is rising but remains below average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further and help even more pupils to exceed the standards expected for their age by making sure that:
 - teaching is of a consistently high quality in all year groups
 - teachers give pupils more opportunities to extend and develop their writing skills in English and in different subjects
 - teachers make sure that pupils present their written work neatly.
- Continue to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability so that it is in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and teachers with responsibilities for subjects, has successfully improved teaching and raised achievement. He is a determined leader who is focused on securing the best outcomes for the pupils at Claregate. The headteacher has high expectations of pupils. Staff and governors share his expectations.
- The school is an inclusive community where everyone is made to feel welcome. 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds', and 'this school has a family feel' were just two of the written comments submitted by parents when they were asked to share their views of the school. Pupils feel valued and speak highly of the staff. They told inspectors that adults encourage them to be tolerant and respectful. This is very apparent in the way that pupils treat each other in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and also where further improvements are required. Their system for tracking the achievement of pupils enables them to check regularly whether groups of pupils are making good progress, to identify quickly any gaps in attainment and to take appropriate action. This careful analysis of pupils' achievement has led to rapid improvements in mathematics and reading this academic year. It has also helped leaders to prioritise pupils' achievement in writing as an aspect requiring further work.
- The systems for managing the staff are rigorous. At the time of this inspection, half of the teachers were not in role when the school was previously inspected. The headteacher recognises that there are a few inconsistencies in teaching and this occasionally leads to slower progress for some pupils. School records show that, at times, teaching in Nursery and Years 1 and 3 does not match the best in the school. Senior and middle leaders are making sure that staff in these year groups receive the training they need to keep on improving.
- The school curriculum is carefully planned so that activities enthuse pupils and motivate them to learn. As a result, pupils make strong gains in their skills and knowledge across a wide range of subjects. In Year 4 for instance, pupils thoroughly enjoyed learning about air resistance and investigating the impact of different materials and the speed of a falling object during a science lesson.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through assemblies, visits and lessons. 'We are taught to appreciate differences,' commented one pupil. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and religions. For example, they explore traditions from countries around the world while learning about African art and patterns in Indian ceramics.
- Staff encourage pupils to take an interest in local news, to learn about the history of Britain and life in modern Britain. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the work of ministers, the royal family and the importance of democracy.
- Primary sports funding makes a valuable contribution to pupils' health and well-being. Pupils of all ages enjoy taking part in the range of activities organised by the sports coaches during lunchtime and after school. These include netball, cricket, football, hockey and multi-skills. The number of pupils taking part in sporting competitions has increased. Most recently, the girls' cricket team won the district championship.
- The local authority has provided the school with a good level of support and challenge through visits and review meetings. Advisers have played a key role in helping the school to improve since the previous inspection. Partnerships with a number of schools have also benefited leaders and staff. Claregate staff have had the opportunity to observe and share effective practice.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is highly effective. In response to the findings of the review of governance, members completed a skills audit and actively sought to recruit governors who could help to boost the work of the governing body. As a collective group, members of the governing body offer pertinent skills and experiences.
 - Governors have a crystal-clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. This is because they are kept well informed by senior leaders. Furthermore, a few governors have established an interim strategic group. This group meets regularly to check the impact of senior leaders' actions on pupils' learning and the quality of teaching. This group is analytical in the way it pinpoints precisely what is working well and what could be better. Leaders and staff welcome the high level of challenge offered by the members of the interim strategic group.

- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is carefully monitored to ensure that it is used effectively. Leaders and governors regularly check that the pupil premium is making enough of a difference to eligible pupils. Together with leaders, governors are making sure that gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the school continue to close.
- The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about all aspects of the school. Many appreciate the improvements that have taken place and the progress of their children. Some parents raised concerns about communication, which have been shared previously with staff. Inspectors found that leaders have responded appropriately to concerns. They have extended the way in which they share information about school events. This includes newsletters, Twitter updates, text messages and electronic copies of all letters on the school's website. Additionally, and in response to a request from parents, leaders recently organised a meeting to explain how staff assess the achievement of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make sure that staff training is up to date and that everyone knows how to raise any concerns they may have about pupils. When new staff are appointed, they receive appropriate information about keeping children safe. Following any safeguarding incidents, leaders and governors review the school's procedures and make appropriate changes to the school's systems. A member of the governing body has particular expertise in safeguarding. He works well with the headteacher to ensure that the school's policies and procedures meet statutory guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers benefit from helpful ongoing guidance from senior leaders and teachers with subject responsibilities. The precise advice that teachers receive is helping to reduce the inconsistencies in teaching in the Nursery and Years 1 and 3. Support from leaders for teachers is also ensuring that pupils make good progress by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss the achievement of different groups of pupils and the actions they will take to help pupils make accelerated progress. Teachers use feedback from these meetings and the knowledge they have about pupils' previous learning to plan suitably challenging activities.
- Teachers provide clear explanations and make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Teachers and teaching assistants keep a close check on pupils. They intervene quickly when pupils need extra guidance or when pupils are ready to be moved on in their learning.
- Pupils are successfully encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils in Year 5, for example, explained that their teachers provide them with a variety of tasks and that they enjoy choosing activities that 'really make them think'.
- Mathematical activities are particularly well planned. Teachers effectively help to deepen pupils' understanding by placing a strong emphasis on problem-solving and reasoning skills. In one Year 4 class, pupils used appropriate calculation strategies to solve complex problems involving time, money, length and capacity and explained the reasons for their answers.
- Effective action has been taken to promote reading across the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the new reading books and an online programme that 'quizzes' them once they have read a book. Staff incorporate reading activities across all subjects and help pupils to read with confidence and expression.
- The school's most current assessment information shows that although outcomes in writing are improving, they are not as strong as in reading and mathematics. Pupils are taught to write for different purposes, to spell accurately and to use punctuation and grammar correctly. Pupils in Year 2, for example enjoyed creating and designing an information leaflet following their visit to a local outdoor educational centre. They used descriptive words and persuasive language well to promote the centre. However, leaders are aware that there is scope for providing pupils with more opportunities to apply and extend their writing skills in English and across different subjects.
- The presentation of pupils' written work varies. Inspectors saw examples of beautifully presented work with pupils taking great care to write legibly. Conversely, they also saw instances of pupils reversing letters and numbers and not distinguishing clearly between the size of capital and lower-case letters.
- Teachers set and mark homework in accordance with the school's policy. A minority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and who spoke with inspectors raised concerns about homework. The headteacher is planning to give all pupils and parents the opportunity to share their views about the school's approach to homework before responding to the concerns of some parents.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff effectively promote the school's 'habits of mind' through lessons and their interactions with pupils. As a consequence, pupils learn to be confident, to persevere, to be humorous when appropriate and to learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils know how to keep safe and understand that bullying can take on different forms. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the online 'Claregate worry box'. They explained that they can use this to report any concern they may have and that the headteacher responds immediately to any issues.
- Through assemblies and classroom discussions, pupils explore and reflect on global issues. Year 6 pupils, for instance, are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, particularly in the context of their locality.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities in the school, such as becoming prefects and becoming members of the school council or the sports council. The sports council members, for instance, explained how they work alongside the sports coaches to organise games and to make sure that the younger pupils in the school are fully involved in the full range of playground activities.
- The attendance of most pupils is good. The overall attendance figure for the school is above the national average for primary schools. School leaders acknowledge improvements and reward pupils for regular attendance. They also post thank-you letters to the parents of children who come to school every day. Despite these incentives, there is a small group of pupils whose attendance, although improving, remains below national figures. In the main, they are pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs or disability.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite. They say please and thank you to each other and adults.
- The team of sports coaches makes a significant contribution to behaviour at lunchtime. They encourage pupils of all ages to cooperate, participate in team games, to play fairly and to be active. Pupils describe the coaches as 'helpful', 'good listeners' and 'fun'.
- Pupils respond straightaway to instructions from adults. Following breaktimes, they return to class ready to learn. As a consequence, lessons start promptly and best use is made of the school day.
- Classroom atmospheres are harmonious. Pupils listen carefully, give considered responses when answering questions and remain focused when asked to work on their own. Occasionally, a few pupils become easily distracted. However, when this happens, staff skilfully manage to regain their attention.
- The majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire agreed that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. A minority raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and the school's response to incidents of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of misbehaviour are infrequent and that staff respond appropriately. School records confirm this to be the case. Records also show that there is a small group of pupils who sometimes do not adhere to the school's rules. However, as a direct result of support from staff, their behaviour has noticeably improved.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Current pupils make good progress over time from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teaching is much stronger than in the past.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the 2015 Year 1 phonics check was above the national average for the majority of pupils. Outcomes by the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils started Year 1 with skills that ranged from below to broadly typical for their age.
- In 2015, almost all pupils in Year 6 made the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Larger proportions than nationally made accelerated progress from their individual starting points at the end of Year 2. In writing, attainment was significantly above average. It was above average in mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar, and average in reading.

- Last year's results for Years 1, 2 and 6 revealed a few differences in the achievement of boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Some of these pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils in the school.
- In response to these variations, important changes have also been made to the curriculum. Topics have been changed so that they interest boys and girls. Senior leaders have also increased the frequency with which they check the achievement of individual pupils so that they can quickly arrange support for those who are at risk of falling behind. These actions are proving successful. The school's latest information and work in pupils' books show that differences in outcomes are reducing and pupils are being well prepared for their secondary education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress by the time they leave the school because of the tailored support they receive. Leaders also make sure that the additional funding the school receives gives these pupils the chance to take part in all the school has to offer.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive suitable help from the adults they work with. Staff also make effective use of resources, including educational software, to cater for their individual learning needs. Pupils' work shows that this combination of support and personalised resources is helping them to achieve well.
- The most able pupils make strong gains in their learning. This is because staff plan work that deepens pupils' thinking; they ask probing questions and move the most able pupils on to more complex work as soon as they are ready.
- The school's information shows that there are no significant differences between the achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups. Staff are particularly good at modifying activities for the small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English.
- Leaders are continually seeking to raise pupils' achievement. They acknowledge that pupils make good progress over time and that gaps between different groups are closing quickly. However, leaders are also acutely aware that further work is required to ensure that more pupils reach even higher standards, especially in writing. The actions that leaders have identified to further improve pupils' outcomes are appropriate.

Early years provision

is good

- The teacher with responsibility for early years is passionate about helping every child achieve their potential. This teacher has a precise understanding of what is working well and also the aspects of Nursery and Reception that could be improved.
- The early years leader has, for instance, accurately identified the need to continue improving the learning environment. There are appropriate plans in place to further develop the outdoor areas and to reorganise the classrooms. Some of the classrooms are cluttered and it is difficult for children to get easy access to the resources they need.
- Since her appointment in January 2016, the early years leader has made important changes to the way children's achievements are recorded. Staff can now quickly identify how well children are learning and also where there are any gaps in children's skills and knowledge. She meets regularly with all staff to check and discuss the achievement of children and to make sure that any issues are quickly addressed.
- Parents are actively encouraged to share their children's successes with early years staff. A 'star award' display recognises a variety of accomplishments, such as reading a book at home or learning to ride a bike.
- The majority of children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age, with some children's development being below what would be expected. In the past, children have started Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age but lower for some. However, as a result of improvements in teaching, this is no longer the case. In 2015, most children started Year 1 with skills that were above those expected. Learning journeys, work in books and the school's records of children's achievements show that children currently in Reception classes are on track to once again exceed the early learning goals.
- The early years leader has reviewed the use of additional funding for disadvantaged children. She is ensuring that the children receive additional support that is based on their specific learning and development needs. This is enabling the disadvantaged children currently in the early years to make the same progress as their classmates.

- Teachers make effective use of the information they have about children's prior learning. They make sure that activities are interesting and build on what children can already do. In Reception Year, for example, a group of most-able children were thoroughly enjoying answering questions that required them to add one-digit and two-digit numbers. They used number lines, counted forwards and counted accurately in twos to find the answers.
- Staff in the early years have created a setting where children are encouraged to be confident and to use their imagination. In the Nursery, for instance, a group of children insisted that inspectors visit their veterinary practice. 'Rabbit is very poorly,' said one child empathetically. The children worked together well as they checked each animal, diagnosed the condition and administered the appropriate medication. This activity made a strong contribution to children's speaking and listening skills.
- In the Reception classes, children behave particularly very well. They listen carefully, share equipment, take it in turns to speak and are polite to each other and adults. This is the same for Nursery children when they complete small-group activities. However, when the Nursery children are all sitting together listening to the teacher, they sometimes become restless, stop listening and their progress slows. In part, this is because the activities that the adults occasionally plan do not inspire the children.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that children are safe and are taught how to keep themselves safe. The children articulately explained how the police, fire service and ambulance crew assist those who may need help.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104310 |
| Local authority | Wolverhampton |
| Inspection number | 431167 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 416 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jeff Webster |
| Headteacher | Mick Murphy |
| Telephone number | 01902 558575 |
| Website | www.claregateprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Email address | claregateprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 29–30 January 2014 |

Information about this school

- Claregate Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Just over half of the pupils are White British, with the remainder from a number of ethnic minority backgrounds. A very small minority are in the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards for 2015, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers with responsibilities for subjects or specific aspects of the school's work, the chair of the governing body and five other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents and pupils during the inspection. An inspector heard some pupils read.
- A range of documentation was considered, including the school's self-evaluation, records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, and information relating to pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors took account of 64 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. Almost half of the class teachers are new to the school.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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