

Cliffe Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107525
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	287839
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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 on roll	168
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Marlon
Headteacher	Mr Andy Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Stoney Lane Lightcliffe Halifax West Yorkshire HX3 8TW
Telephone number	01422 202086
Fax number	01422 205286

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average size school serves Lightcliffe, which is a suburb of Halifax with a mixture of rented and owner occupied housing. Virtually all of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is twice the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has a nurture unit that caters for pupils with challenging behaviour both from within the school and from other local schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features. It enjoys the very strong support of parents. They really appreciate the approachability of staff and are very pleased with the progress their children make, particularly those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are proud of their school. They feel very safe and secure and are eager to talk about the interesting things they do. Almost all pupils have very good attendance and are punctual. However, the attendance of a very small number of pupils is chronically poor despite the considerable efforts made by the school and the local authority to tackle this problem. As a result the overall attendance in the school, although improved, remains below average. Despite this pupils' personal development overall is outstanding and together with their secure knowledge of basic skills enables them to face the future with great confidence.

Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. Children come into the Foundation Stage with skills that are well below average, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their language and mathematical development. Effective provision enables them to make strong progress and currently they reach the levels expected of them by the end of Reception. Standards in Year 2 are currently below average. However, these particular pupils are achieving well given that their attainment at the start of Year 1 was well below average. Achievement has been good for several years in Key Stage 2 and this year standards have risen sharply, exceeding the realistic targets set by the school, to be broadly average.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use their assessments of what pupils know very well to carefully plan lessons. A particular strength is the match of work and support to the needs of the different groups in each class. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide very helpful guidance as to how pupils can improve what they do. However, they do not ensure that pupils act on the comments they make and so the full benefit of their efforts are not realised. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all groups well, particularly those who have personal, social and emotional problems and those who find learning difficult for other reasons. While there is a very appropriate emphasis placed on basic skills other subjects are valued and this leads to impressive work, for example, in art. Care guidance and support are outstanding. The school works very effectively to promote pupils' understanding of healthy living and has achieved the Healthy School and Active Mark awards. The pastoral support and guidance given to pupils is extremely effective and has led to the transformation in the behaviour and attitudes of pupils who have had severe emotional and behavioural problems. All pupils' progress is checked regularly and rigorously. This underpins the very effective targets that help pupils take the next steps in their learning and the excellent provision made for those whose performance may have dipped or those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This is a school that faces challenging circumstances and whose pupils face considerable barriers to their learning. Outstanding leadership and management and the strength of commitment of staff and governors have ensured that standards are rising, achievement is strong and that the pastoral and academic needs of pupils are met exceptionally well. As a result the school has an excellent capacity to improve further. There are robust and extremely effective procedures in place to evaluate how well the school is performing and together with the views of pupils and parents these evaluations inform the very appropriate plans for improving the school further. The school's judgements made on pupils' personal development, their care, guidance and support and on leadership and management are too modest, reflecting the high expectations

evident in the school. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to benefit fully from the very helpful comments made on their work by ensuring they always act on what has been suggested.
- Improve the poor attendance of the very small number of pupils for whom this is a problem.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average. They make good progress across the school and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. Girls attain higher than boys but both make good progress overall. Standards are rising throughout the school because of the determined effort to ensure that all make the best possible progress. The provisional test results for Year 6 pupils in 2007 show a marked improvement and are the best the school has ever achieved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets. For a few pupils their academic progress is slower; this is because they have had severe social and emotional problems that have affected their learning. These pupils receive an excellent range of support to help them to overcome their difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent and this represents outstanding progress in the personal development of the many who come into the school with behavioural and emotional problems. Attendance is satisfactory because the very small group of pupils with poor attendance records bring the overall school attendance down below average, despite the very good attendance of the other pupils. Pupils across the school clearly enjoy lessons and work hard in them. They have excellent understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy. They enjoy the healthy snacks that are available and the many opportunities they have to exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils are keen to support fund-raising activities, join in school productions and relish the responsibilities they are given, particularly in the class and school councils. They are very proud of the improvements that have been made, at their suggestion, to the playground and the decoration of the library.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective across the school because there is consistency in the approaches used in all classes. Teachers carefully explain to pupils what they will be learning so that they understand what they are doing and why. They then successfully encourage pupils to judge for themselves how well they have done. As a result of this, and the helpful targets they are given, pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. However, teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' understanding further because they do not always ensure that pupils respond to the very helpful comments they make on pupils' work. Questions are often used well to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to tease out their ideas. The teaching of pupils in the nurture

group benefits from the multi-sensory approaches that are used which enable pupils to learn in different ways. These approaches are also used increasingly across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum places a very appropriate emphasis on developing the basic skills of pupils and on their personal development, where there is the greatest deficit in their attainment when they come into school. The strength of the programmes for literacy, numeracy and personal development are very evident in the progress the pupils make in these significant areas. Additionally the school works hard to promote pupils' enjoyment through the use of visits and themed weeks, for example, the 'International Week'. As a result the pupils are engaged, interested and enjoy their work. This often leads to good work in subjects such as design and technology, history, geography and particularly art. The school does not yet provide pupils with opportunities to learn a modern foreign language. The provision for the nurture group is excellent and many of the effective strategies used here are now being implemented to good effect across the school. Good opportunities for sport are provided through the links to the local sports college. The range of clubs is limited and pupils would welcome more choice.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent care, guidance and support available to pupils are built on the sympathetic, positive and consistent approach of all staff. There are excellent programmes to support pupils' personal development and the rigorous and regular monitoring of the pupils' pastoral and academic progress. All pupils benefit from the clear targets for learning and, when necessary, for their personal development. These are based on regular assessments. Pupils respond extremely well to the positive and very effective behaviour policy and the excellent provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education that has been commended by the local authority. The school works extremely well with parents and external agencies to resolve individual pupil's problems. The school has robust and efficient systems in place to safeguard pupils. Attendance is very carefully monitored and prompt action taken if any absences are unexplained.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has built very effectively on the strengths that were identified by the last inspection and has continued to raise standards and improve achievement. This is because the headteacher has high expectations and is always seeking to make things better. All staff share this determination and work in close partnership with parents to promote pupils' learning. The excellent systems the school uses to judge its effectiveness include very good use of data, rigorous but supportive observations of teaching and learning, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils about their work. External consultants are used to moderate the school's judgements; this helps the school to check the objectivity of their own judgements. Governors have a very good understanding of the school based on their own direct observations and discussions with staff and pupils. They carefully monitor the implementation of the school's improvement plan but have too little involvement in drawing it up.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Cliffe Hill Community Primary School, Halifax HX3 8TW

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. I think you go to a good school. Some parts are outstanding. I know from what you told me that you are proud of your school and that you enjoy the many interesting things you do. I think the adults in school look after you exceptionally well. Your behaviour is outstanding, you get on really well with each other and have an excellent understanding of what you need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way.

Your lessons are carefully planned. Your teachers make sure that you understand what you are learning and that you get all the help you need. This ensures that you make good progress in learning new things. I agree with you that the 'credit card' targets you have are really helpful.

All the grownups in school, including the governors, work hard to make your school the best they can. They appreciate the good ideas you have to make the school better and this has led to the really exciting playground you now have.

I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that you always do what they suggest in the comments they make on your work and then your work would be even better
- improve the attendance of a very small number of you who miss too many days in school.

You can help your teachers by always trying to do what they say when they write comments in your books and by learning the spellings they have corrected in your work.

I would like to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming.