

School Teaching and Learning Review 23/24 November 2015

On behalf of Sheffield Diocese

School Improvement Reviewer: Andrew Clark

Clifford C of E Infant School Psalter Lane Sheffield

Contextual Information

Clifford is a Church of England aided infant school. It is smaller than the average primary with approximately 90 pupils on roll. There are three classes of approximately 30 pupils.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (eligible for pupil premium funding) is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is currently below average. The large majority of pupils are from white British families.

Pupils are drawn from families representing a wide range of social circumstances and occupations. The school has no immediate catchment area and many families travel from across the city.

The school's assessment data show that children's attainment on entry to the Early Years is variable but often **below typically** expected levels, especially in speaking skills and social skills.

Previous Ofsted Inspection The previous **inspection was in June 2012**. The school was judged as **good** overall with **outstanding behaviour and safety**. The main recommendation from the inspection to was accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics to match that in reading and writing.

The judgements of this review:

Leadership and management:	Outstanding
Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, Welfare and Behaviour	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early Years	Outstanding

The review

During the review the headteacher and reviewer observed teaching and learning throughout the school and visited all classes. Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions held with groups of pupils. Pupils were heard read. Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff with subject and other responsibilities. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body. A wide range of leadership, safeguarding, teaching and assessment documents, including the school's website, were analysed. Several parents were spoken to during the review.

Leadership and management are outstanding.

The **headteacher** provides **outstanding** leadership. She sets the tone for the school and provides an **excellent example** to staff, parents and pupils through her **energy, imagination** and **high quality teaching**. She rightly describes the school as 'A village school in the heart of the city'. She creates and sustains a **warm, exciting and ambitious environment** where high standards are evident in every quarter.

The headteacher **devolves leadership** extremely well throughout the school. All staff are keen and well supported to take **significant and systematic** leadership roles, even when they are new to the school and almost new to the profession. The issues from the last inspection have been speedily, imaginatively and **thoroughly addressed**. Change and improvement are whole school collective affairs but everyone has clear and precise roles in achieving their part. This is very evident in, for example, the 'same day' interventions for mathematics, the **high quality use of computers** and other technology, the leadership of the early years and special educational needs. Subject development is based on **structured research**, high expectations and regular monitoring and evaluation.

Leaders make excellent use of a wide range of strategies, including analysis of data, teachers' planning, book reviews and pupil discussions to improve outcomes. They form a **strong team** who are extremely **reflective and self-critical**. Staff make **rigorous use of new assessment procedures** at all stages to inform planning and future development. They have an **excellent knowledge** of individual and group differences in achievement. Consequently, there are very few significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Staff set **highly challenging targets** for pupils in all subjects and review them frequently.

The curriculum is **extremely skilfully structured** and very **exciting**. Staff plan lessons to consistently accelerate pupils' progress and secure learning and mastery of key skills. They provide a myriad of opportunities to apply these skills through different subjects. For example, pupils have been strongly motivated to produce high quality work in English, computers, history, science, mathematics and religious education. Pupils' **highly effective collaborative and independent learning skills** underpin their increasingly strong progress and prepare them well for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils **lives are enriched** by **specialist** teaching in musical, artistic and sporting activities within and beyond the school day. They participate in stimulating visits. For example, they have extremely close links with the nearby St Andrew's church but also visit **other places of worship** such a Synagogue and Mosque. To cap it all, the pupils have a **week's residential visit** during their school career which makes a very **significant contribution** to their person, social and learning development.

Procedures for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and the safeguarding member of the governing body are rigorous in ensuring staff are appropriately vetted and trained. Policies and procedures are **fully up to date** and readily accessible to parents and others through the website. The school receives good support from the local authority in maintaining the single central record.

The **warm and friendly welcome children** and their parents receive from the administrative and business staff is a strong reason for the schools on-going success. This is further supported by the **well maintained building** and high quality of cleanliness overseen by the buildings manager.

The governing body is **extremely effective**. They provide robust support and challenge to the leadership. They have a **well planned role in evaluating all aspects** of school improvement planning. They are extremely reflective and make very good use of a wide range of skills to efficiently fulfil their responsibilities. They value the commitment of the headteacher and all her staff and their evident ambition for the pupils.

The school has **excellent relationships** with parents and with other local education providers. Parents are actively involved in supporting pupils' learning and **express very positive views** in questionnaires and discussions.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The quality of teaching is **outstanding**. The headteacher sets a very high level of expectation for staff to follow. Teachers make **excellent use** of every moment to drive learning forwards and engage the pupils.

The teaching of reading and writing is **excellent**. Pupils make rapid progress from starting the early years in securing high levels of **knowledge and understanding of phonic skills**. Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent skills to promote early reading. This is complimented by very precise record keeping and good levels of parental involvement. Volunteers provide frequent opportunities for children to practice their reading. Pupil's comprehension skills are strongly developed. Teachers expect pupils to understand the deeper meaning in the books they read and to explain their thinking to others. They ensure pupils answer questions pertinently and clearly.

Pupils' writing is excellent. Writing skills are acquired alongside reading skills. Letter formation is accurate and good writing posture is encouraged from the start. Children in the early years have many imaginative reasons to form the shapes of letters in sand, water and mashed potatoes. They move quickly to independently forming words and sentences. Throughout school pupils have challenging and purposeful reasons to write. For example, they invite their own animal to tea in the style of 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' or writing detailed descriptive sentences on Autumn Adjectives. All writing tasks are underpinned by the development of grammar, spelling, punctuation and handwriting to above average levels.

Mathematics is extremely well taught. Key skills are directly and very efficiently taught. A thorough understanding and recall of number facts provides the scaffolding for the mastery of mathematics. Pupils achieve very good calculation skills and build on this to solve real-life problems. There is an excellent system for quickly identifying any groups or individuals who are struggling with new learning and stepping in to address weaknesses. Again staff's subject knowledge is a key element in ensuring standards are high for pupils of all abilities.

Assessments are accurate and based on an excellent knowledge of expectations for pupils of all ages and abilities. The assessments are used extremely well to set appropriate but challenging expectations in a range of subjects. The targets are beyond national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. They are rigorously and effectively pursued.

Teachers **question pupils deeply and consistently**. They expect and receive clear and well-thought-out answers in response. Pupils' **reasoning skills and ability** to solve problems, especially in mathematics and science, are increasingly well developed as a consequence.

Lessons are **imaginative and stimulating**. They make excellent use of a wide range of stimulating resources. Problem solving and science investigations are strongly based on real-life situations. The use of computers, including the use of QR readers to demonstrate the full extent of pupils' learning, is excellent. The school library is well used and equipped.

Teachers' expectations are high. Work is beautifully presented by pupils of all abilities. The refreshed marking procedures are **consistently applied** and enthusiastically responded to by the pupils.

Teaching assistants make an **invaluable contribution** to pupils' learning throughout the school. They work in **close partnership with** teachers and have a good understanding of pupils' needs.

The school makes very good use of staff with **specialist teaching and coaching skill**. This is very evident, for example, in the high quality of singing and enthusiasm for music and sports.

There is not a moment wasted throughout the school and staff **take every opportunity** to nurture, challenge and engage the pupils. The supportive, Christian ethos ensures that pupils leave the school as mature, reflective individuals who are **extremely well prepared** for their future learning.

Personal development, Welfare and Behaviour

Pupils' attendance is **well above average** for all groups of learners and was close to 100 per cent at the time of the review. The school has **extremely** high expectations for punctuality and attendance which are shared with parents. Teachers ensure that every moment of the day is **stimulating and engaging**.

Pupils' **behaviour is outstanding**. Teachers give them credit for their success and help them to recognise strengths in their behaviour and attitudes. Children from the early years on take significant responsibility for their own behaviour. They recognise right from wrong. This is evident in the displays of work on aims and values and the contribution they can make to society. **Bullying is extremely rare** and pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Dining with the pupils is an **absolute pleasure** as they take care of each other and visitors. Children in the early years settle in extremely quickly and learn to play and work safely together. **Pupils are very polite to each other**. Classrooms are tidy and well organised. Daily routines are very clear and well established. As a result, pupils **know exactly** what is expected of them.

Pupils' **attitudes to learning** are **excellent**. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent** and evident throughout the curriculum. Pupils take an extremely wide range of responsibilities very seriously from dinner monitors to school councillors. They contribute to their own progress and personal development. They aim high and take a pride in their work. There are many examples of reflective and thoughtful comments about their own and others work. Children in the early years look after their toys and resources and dress themselves for physical education lessons.

The school has made excellent use of funding for sports to ensure pupils have plenty to do at breaks and after school. Their dancing skills are excellent and make a delightful contribution to school productions.

Acts of collective worship and the excellent links with local places of worship make a significant contribution to pupils' sense of well-being and self-awareness. They know they are loved and protected.

Above all, **staff treat pupils with immense respect** and the pupils respond in kind. Pupils feel very confident to speak to adults and their peers in many different situations. This is a key factor in pupils' **highly positive learning skills**.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils leave the school with standards which are **significantly above the national average** and have done so for many years. This is fully reflected in the results of **national tests and assessment for Year 2** and in all the work seen during the review. The proportion of pupils **achieving well above** expected levels is very high in reading, writing and mathematics. Extremely few pupils do not achieve the expectations for their age for the end of Year 2 and in 2015 all pupils **reached at least the national average**.

Children enter the early years with a very wide range of skills and knowledge. They have many different learning experiences before they start Clifford Infant school. They make **excellent progress** from their **individual starting points**. The school acts quickly to address any differences between achievement of different groups, such as gender or disadvantage. By the time they leave children have made excellent progress overall and leave with standards which are largely **above the national average**.

Pupils' achievement in **speaking, reading and writing is outstanding**. Pupils are confident and articulate in expressing their well reasoned views. This is in direct response to all staff's consistent high expectations and well-targeted questions. Many of the Year 2 pupils are choosing their own books and challenging themselves. Pupils often read with **exceptional fluency** whatever their ability and deep understanding. Phrases such as 'determined to look dignified' do not phase them! They bring colour and life to their writing with very good use of grammar and punctuation such as 'The gardener's feet were crunching, while the hedgehog was asleep!' Handwriting is joined, cursive and neatly formed. Pupils' **write fluently** including those who sometimes find learning difficulty.

Pupils very good progress in reading is also reflected in the results of checks for pupils' phonic skills in Year 1. **Ninety-seven percent** achieved the expected level in 2015, well above the national average.

Achievement in mathematics is high and **has risen extremely well** since the last Ofsted inspection. Almost 60 per cent of pupils reach the higher level in Year 2 national tests. They work accurately and neatly which means that they make few errors when setting out numbers. **They make very good use** of a wide range of strategies such as number lines to count on in groups or multiples of numbers. They use precise mathematical terms. Their knowledge of shape and measure is extremely good. They make **excellent progress in applying these skills** and solving problems.

The pupils' work books and displays around school consistently show the **high levels of progress** and achievement all groups of learners make. **Excellent standards of art, geography, history**, science and many other subjects are evident throughout the school.

Key recommendations of this review

The headteacher and her staff have an excellent knowledge of how to maintain the high quality of teaching and learning.

Additional considerations

Above all, do not lose the excellent range of strengths and qualities the school possesses

Consider the best ways to ensure that the school's effectiveness is clear and transparent to all;

- review all documentation relating to self-evaluation and school improvement to be certain that it is positive and active in tone; that it is reflective but assertive and factual
- be sure that key points are communicated as briefly and succinctly as possible without losing depth
- further review the gathering and recording of the governing body's activities including the governing body minutes, to sharply reflect the challenge and that governors provide
- ensure that the reports to the governing body also show the drive for constant improvement, not just through the supplementary information provided

Continue to share and devolve leadership within the staff team.

Continue to build on the very good assessment practice to precisely pinpoint and promote the achievement of different groups across the school

Hit the ground running when the school begins to expand!