

Inspection of a good school: Claycots School

Monksfield Way, Slough, Berkshire SL2 1QX

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 July 2024

Outcome

Claycots School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Claycots. They think it is a happy place. Despite the size of the school and the physical divide created by two sites, there is a strong sense of one community with a highly nurturing ethos. Central to this are the staff themselves, who have a shared vision to provide the best they can, no matter what pupils' backgrounds or barriers in life are.

Children in early years get off to a good start. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds or who are in danger of falling behind when they join the school are supported well, because staff are knowledgeable and alert to their needs. The same is true for many pupils who join the school throughout the school year, many with English as an additional language.

Aspirations for what pupils can achieve are high. Pupils know this and are motivated to do their best, not afraid to try again if things go wrong. Pupils told inspectors that they feel that behaviour has improved, that they feel safe, are enjoying school and learning more. Classroom visits showed this to be the case, not least due to the enthusiastic approach of staff, described by one group of pupils as 'well educated' themselves.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This is a school on an upward trajectory. Much has been done in the recent past to refine and improve the curriculum offer. Leadership of the curriculum is a passion and a strength. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the curriculum is fit for purpose and closely linked to evolving cohorts of pupils from a wide range of backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are also supported well because the curriculum is accessible, without lowering aspiration. The impact of this is that pupils' outcomes are improving over time and are clearly better than they were at the time of the school's last inspection.

Older pupils are increasingly well prepared for their move to secondary education. Discussions with Year 6 pupils during a science lesson revealed a positive attitude to their

next steps. Shared descriptions of recent 'transition visits' to secondary schools showed a high degree of understated confidence as horizons widen on their shared journeys as young scientists.

The school has made reading the central pillar of its curriculum. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and are reading. The school is truly a book-rich environment. Visits from authors are commonplace, including during the inspection. Much thought has gone into ensuring those that struggle to read are given additional support. Appropriate resources are available and the checks of pupils' development as early readers are sound. Staff also benefit from ongoing expert training, though, on occasion, not all deliver the school's chosen phonics programme with the strict fidelity required.

Discussions with pupils revealed their appreciation of their school as a place of learning. They value subjects such as design technology and geography equally as much as English and mathematics. The culture to learn new things clearly starts in Nursery and Reception, where a rich learning environment sparks young imaginations. Much of the school's curriculum is firmly founded in the early years, preparing children well for the challenges of key stage 1.

Classroom visits on both sites of the school showed a high degree of consistency in the way staff plan learning. Inspectors gained a strong sense that pupils in multiple classes across single year groups are accessing a broadly equal curriculum offer because of the effective oversight of leaders at all levels. Where there is slight variation, this comes in the way that some staff implement the curriculum. Though staff generally plan adaptations to learning well, not all staff are as confident or skilled at checking pupils' understanding or addressing misconceptions during lessons. When this is the case, pupils' progress through the curriculum is not as strong as it could be. Leaders are aware of this. Support is in place and increasing, but more needs to be done to address this issue.

Pupils' personal development is supported well across the school with a clear sense of purpose underpinning this important aspect of provision. A core focus is on broadening pupils' understanding of equality, difference, varying cultures, and religions. The personal, social and health education programme is adapted well to respond to varying needs and potential issues, both in and outside of school. Pupils talk positively about their experiences on residential trips. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well to enjoy a broad range of experiences beyond the curriculum.

Another aspect worth celebrating is the school's recent success in improving pupils' attendance. Governors and key leaders have made this a key priority. They have facilitated additional resources and the capacity of staff to reduce persistent absence significantly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff teach the school's early reading programme as consistently as they might. When this is the case, the quality of phonics teaching is variable. This means that some pupils do not always benefit from the highest quality phonics teaching they need. This is also the case for some pupils who are at the early stages or struggling with reading. The school needs to ensure that its phonics programme is delivered with total fidelity by all staff who teach pupils to read.
- On occasion, staff do not implement the school's intended curriculum as well as they might. In some classrooms, teachers miss opportunities to check pupils' understanding and are not as skilled at spotting misconceptions or moving learning forward as they could be. This means that some pupils are not making as much progress with their learning as they might. The school needs to ensure that all staff are better equipped to deal with misconceptions, assess pupils' progress and move learning on when opportunities arise.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	132089
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10321921
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1708
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rupinder Sondh
Headteacher	Sarah Mijatovich
Website	www.claycots.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 November 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school situated on two sites approximately three miles apart.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, who was accompanied by four other governors. An inspector held a telephone conversation with officers from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, science and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held

discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector heard some pupils read to a known adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. Inspectors also met formally with a representative group of pupils on both sites of the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted's survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phillip Blagg

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted Inspector

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