

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Clifton Community School

Middle Lane, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S65 2SN

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Anna Leng. This school is part of the Wickersley Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen O'Brien, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Calvert.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils form strong relationships with staff at Clifton Community School. Staff care deeply about the pupils and go the extra mile to offer support where needed. The school celebrates the cultural diversity of its pupils through activities such as 'Cultural Day.' This helps pupils feel a sense of belonging at the school.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. The number of pupils accessing the English Baccalaureate suite of qualifications has increased significantly since the previous inspection. However, pupils' achievement does not match these high expectations. Published outcomes show pupils' achievement is below national averages and is declining over time.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Classrooms are calm learning environments. Pupils and staff state that there are still small pockets of disruption at social times and between lessons. The school is working to address this. Bullying does occur at the school. When this happens, the school has robust processes in place to deal with it.

Pupils have access to a well-planned and wide-ranging careers programme. By the end of key stage 4, pupils are well informed about their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

The school has worked together with the trust to design a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is well considered and builds knowledge logically over time. The school trains teachers to use various strategies to deliver the curriculum. These include questioning techniques and a school system to give feedback to pupils. Some teachers use these strategies well. Where this happens, pupils gain a strong understanding. However, where there are inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum, gaps in pupils' learning exist.

The school prioritises reading. All pupils read a class text with their form tutor. These texts are carefully chosen to reflect pupils' backgrounds and experiences. The school identifies the weakest readers effectively. These pupils receive support to catch up with their peers. Some of this work is relatively new. Presently, some pupils with gaps in their reading do not develop the fluency and confidence they need.

The school effectively identifies pupils with SEND. Effective support is in place in lessons so these pupils can access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND make good progress through the curriculum.

The school has worked hard to reduce suspensions over time. The reduction in suspensions has seen an increase in lower-level sanctions. Some of the pupils receiving these sanctions miss too many lessons. As a result, they have gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum. The school offers effective support to pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils who actively engage in this support reduce sanctions over time and access more of the curriculum.

Pupils' rates of attendance were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has robust and effective systems in place to help improve attendance. As a result, attendance is improving over time, and persistent absenteeism is reducing. However, attendance for some groups of pupils is still too low. These pupils miss too much learning, which hinders their achievement.

Provision for pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils build their character through the 'Clifton way', which includes the 'pledges' programme. This program offers a variety of activities such as volunteering and charity work that pupils take part in during their time at school. Pupils have a strong understanding of protected characteristics and how they relate to diversity and inclusion. They know how to stay healthy and understand different types of relationships. Pupils develop their talents and interests by taking part in extra-curricular activities or learning to play a musical instrument in Years 7 and 8.

The local governing body and the trustees work closely with the school. They provide effective support and challenge where appropriate. Despite this, leaders do not always use all of the information available to monitor the impact of the curriculum effectively. The school is mindful of workload. Staff feel supported at the school. They are proud to work here.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is inconsistent across the school. Staff use a range of strategies with varying degrees of success. Consequently, pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge they should. The school should ensure the curriculum is consistently implemented so pupils learn well across all subjects.
- Too many pupils miss out on lessons. This may be through absence from school or because pupils are completing behaviour sanctions. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of the curriculum. The school should continue to do all it can to reduce the number of pupils missing out on lessons.
- The school does not know what impact the intended curriculum is having in some subjects. As a result, in some subjects, the impact of the intended curriculum is not always fully understood, resulting in inconsistent implementation of necessary improvements. The school should ensure leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of how to use data effectively to drive curriculum improvements and ensure these changes are made promptly.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 143545   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Rotherham  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10346645   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Secondary comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11 to 16   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 1,172  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Steve Calvert  |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | Helen O'Brien  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Anna Leng  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.cliftonschool.org">www.cliftonschool.org</a> |
| <b>Dates of previous inspection</b>        | 4 and 5 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- Clifton Community School joined Wickersley Partnership Trust in December 2017.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils on the SEND register.
- The school uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 met with the headteacher and other senior staff.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust.
- An inspector met with the chair of the local governing body (LGB), two other members of the LGB and a member of the trust board.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Sergeant, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louisa Morris

Ofsted Inspector

Thomas Wraith

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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