

Colman Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120937
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380136
Inspection dates	31 January – 1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Lewis

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Myra Vogwill
Headteacher	Carolyn Sayer
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2009
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Age group	7–11
Inspection date(s)	31 January–1 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Lewis

Additional inspector

Andrew Wibroe

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons led by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with the senior staff, groups of pupils, teaching assistants and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, the school's development planning, safeguarding documentation and practices. They heard pupils read and talked with them about their work. Inspectors scrutinised 75 parental questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized junior school. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. There is an above average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including 15 who have a statement of special educational needs. The school has specialist resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This provides currently for six pupils who are deaf, some of whom also have additional more complex needs. The school staffs this provision by buying in the services of qualified teachers of the deaf from the Norfolk County Sensory Service. The number of pupils who join the school during the year is average. However, a number of pupils have joined the school during Years 5 and 6 from other schools, because until recently, the school has not filled all of its places.

The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is well led by a leadership team who are determined to meet the needs of every pupil who attends and seeks out ways of achieving this. Rigorous analysis of data ensures they and the governing body have an excellent understanding of pupils' progress and what the school needs to do to improve this further.
- Pupils achieve well whatever their starting points, backgrounds or needs, because the teaching is almost always good or better. In reading and mathematics, attainment is above average. The percentage of pupils in Year 6 already exceeding the expected Level 4 in these subjects is high.
- Pupils read confidently and well. Some who are disabled or have special educational needs, and some of those join the school partway through their primary education, make remarkable progress in reading in a relatively short time because they are given systematic support for skills such as recognising letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Pupils benefit from a good range of interventions to support writing skills. These are accelerating progress for all groups but, in some classes, not enough opportunities are provided for all learners to write at length in different subjects.
- Pupils who are deaf say they love school and feel included. They make good progress in their numeracy and communication skills such as in their use of British Sign Language.
- Pupils' behave well. Behaviour in lessons is sometimes exemplary and contributes to the quality of learning. Pupils feel safe because they are looked after well. They have every confidence that if incidents do occur staff will deal with them fairly and quickly.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all groups of pupils, including lower attainers, have more opportunities for writing at length in English and in the different subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good and often outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the pace, challenge and activities in all parts of lessons meet the needs of all learners
 - teachers check more consistently on pupils' understanding and skills in lessons by involving them more actively and adjusting the balance of teacher talk and pupil activity, particularly in the whole-class part of lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school with attainment that is generally in line with that expected for their age, although it is lower in writing. Colman Junior works well with its feeder school to ensure a smooth transition for those who have specific learning needs. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress means that the school quickly identifies any who might be falling behind and provides interventions to accelerate their learning. This means that the gap between lower and higher attainers is narrowing, particularly in reading and mathematics. Higher attainers are suitably stretched so that, by Year 6, the percentage of pupils at the higher levels in English and mathematics generally exceeds that attained nationally.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and take every opportunity to be involved and share their ideas. Their achievements are best in reading because reading for meaning and phonic skills are taught systematically and pupils have many opportunities in other subjects to apply their skills. An emphasis on talk for writing also supports pupils' speaking and listening skills and confidence well, including those with speech and language difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. These pupils make good and sometimes better progress from their starting points because of the individual attention paid to their needs and the strong working with outside agencies. Those known to be eligible for free school meals also benefit from the good teaching and the individualised programmes, making similarly good progress overall. Parents and carers recognise this careful monitoring of their children's learning in the many plaudits that were received about the school's work. A few wished to have even more information but were still positive about their child's learning and progress.

Pupils take great pride in their work and generally it is presented very well. They read it back to inspectors with pride. They know their targets and next steps toward them. This helps them to be clear about the progress they are making. One pupil

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said, 'I didn't really know how to read before I came here but now I can choose any book I want and have a good try at reading it.' Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the quality of interventions and support. The school is skilful in ensuring that pupils' specialist needs are met through staff training and careful deployment of staff so that pupils progress well towards their language and other targets. Pupils who are deaf have good attention paid to their communication skills and progress well in these. However, their progress in literacy, though satisfactory overall, is more varied because sometimes teachers and others are too quick to help or supply the answer rather than challenging them to work things out for themselves.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good because most teachers plan carefully to meet pupils' differing needs. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and pupils rise to these. For example, good use of probing questions in a mathematics lessons about cuboids, explored what pupils already knew and helped them to work out answers for themselves. Occasionally, in the whole class part of lessons, teachers talk for too long themselves, when more ideas and answers could have been gained from the pupils. Group work, is used well to enable pupils to share ideas and evaluate each other's work. Pupils enjoy these opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to help each other. Occasionally, lessons or parts of lessons lack the right challenge for everyone in the class. For example, pupils of different abilities may have the same task to do, which means the work is too easy or too hard for a few. Staff are confident in the new approaches they are using to teach writing and calculations in mathematics. They plan their support for these skills systematically and give clear messages and good explanations to pupils about what they are meant to be learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by most teachers to excite pupils' imaginations.

Pupils, parents and carers are very positive about the quality of teaching and the ways in which individual pupils who have particular needs are supported. Teaching assistants play a skilled role in supporting the learning in classrooms and for these pupils. They have been well trained and understand well the needs of the pupils to which they are assigned, focusing clearly on targets for the child but also nurturing their confidence. Pupils who are deaf receive good support within their deaf awareness programme and for their specialist communication needs such as in the use of sign language. However, not all the technology available to support pupils' listening is used to best effect, particularly in poor acoustic conditions such as in assembly or because equipment has not been checked for faults at the very beginning of the day.

The school's aims and values stress the importance of respect, dignity and of valuing the diversity of each individual. It achieves this aim well. Pupils say they enjoy learning about each other's beliefs and lives, and those of people in different parts of the world or at different times in history. They gain a good understanding of and respect for the diversity of beliefs and cultures. Social communications programmes

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help even those with the most complex needs to improve the ways in which they deal with others and make friends.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

This is a harmonious community where pupils enjoy the company of their teachers and their friends. The ethos of care and concern that surrounds each pupil is mirrored in the respect and support that pupils show to one another, helping each other, for example, to find spellings or to carry books. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and often excellent, with teachers rarely having to reprimand pupils. Some pupils have learning needs that include challenging behaviour and these are generally managed well. Occasionally, such behaviour disrupts lessons but staff training and consistency in managing the behaviour makes such incidents rare. Discussions with pupils, including those who are deaf, show that they have a developed understanding of their classmates' needs and a clear moral code as to what is or is not acceptable. In their replies to the inspection questionnaires, a few parents and carers indicated that they had concerns about behaviour and mentioned specific incidents or year groups. Inspectors explored these issues with school leaders as well as making focused observations. The school's procedures for dealing with incidents and practices for supporting good behaviour were judged to be rigorous. Attendance is now high, reflecting pupils' increased enjoyment of their learning.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the risks that they face. For example, they know about cycling safety, internet safety and the dangers of social networking sites. The school's personal social and health education programme promotes this awareness well, as does the careful attention paid in subjects such as science and physical education to the use and movement of equipment.

Leadership and management

Parents and staff praise the leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team. There is a huge sense of ambition and pursuit of improvement within this school. A detailed school development plan drives planning well, whether at governance, subject, and class or whole-school level. The governing body fully understands the school's development needs and successfully holds it to account.

The leadership team have developed effective systems to tackle underachievement, secure equality and combat discrimination in the school through rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and experiences. This ensures any difficulties are identified early and addressed, that all groups are included, and support is adjusted if necessary. For example, many staff have taken qualifications in British Sign Language to ensure that they can meet the needs of pupils who are deaf as effectively as possible. Robust monitoring of initiatives and programmes has raised attendance, accelerated progress and secured the quality of teaching as good, demonstrating a good capacity to improve further.

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The good and improving curriculum has an appropriate emphasis on key skills, including ICT, but also strengthened support for pupils' creative and physical development. A good range of clubs offers the opportunity for fun and practical ways of reinforcing key skills and is seen by parents and carers as very supportive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, with particular strengths in pupils' developing self and social awareness and their understanding of broader environmental and social issues.

Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The school works well with parents, carers and outside agencies to secure the safety and wellbeing of the pupils in their care. Training and inclusion arrangements with an adjoining specialist special school are further enhancing the provision for those pupils with the most complex needs. The new arrangement for staffing the specialist resource base supports pupils' access to specialist expertise and generally meets their needs well, although some of the ways in which this will be formally monitored are only just being developed.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Colman Junior School, Norwich, NR4 7AU

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing how well you are learning. Thank you for filling in the questionnaire and sharing your work with us. We were pleased to hear all the good things you had to say about the school and we agree with you that it is a good school. Here are some of the things we liked about it.

- You almost always behave well in lessons and are courteous to each other and adults.
- You enjoy your learning and make good progress, particularly in your reading and mathematics.
- The teaching is good. You like your teachers and try hard to please them.
- The school cares for you very well.
- Everyone gets on well and this helps newcomers and those with special educational needs such as deafness to quickly feel at home.

We have asked the school to think about how they can make the following improvements, so that you achieve even more.

- Make the teaching even better by asking teachers to involve you even more in lessons and make sure the work is not too easy or too hard for you.
- Give you even more opportunities to write in the different subjects that you study.

You can help to by telling your teachers whenever you find your work is too easy or too hard.

I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis
Lead inspector

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