

Colston Bassett School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Colston Bassett School is an independent selective co-educational day school in rural Nottinghamshire. The school's building is a former village primary school with its own extensive grounds incorporating a hard play area, field and garden. It opened in 2007 as a response to requests from parents requiring continuity of education for their children upon leaving Millfield Nursery in a village nearby. It is owned and managed by the proprietors of the nursery and a third director who is a school parent, but is open to all. The school's aim is to provide pupils with a safe and caring environment in which each individual can flourish and which will provide a platform for future success. The school motto is 'Vitae Discimus' or 'We learn for life' with an ethos based on Christian principles.

The school is registered to provide education for up to 72 pupils aged four to 11 years. It provides a curriculum broadly based on the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2. There are currently 18 pupils on roll aged four to nine years. Pupils are either from the village or the rural community nearby. Pupils are arranged in three classes. There is a Reception class with currently eight pupils, a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils and a class of Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils. There are no pupils currently with a statement of special educational needs and one pupil who speaks English as an additional language. The school was previously inspected in June 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Colston Bassett School provides a good education for its pupils and meets its aims extremely well. It has continued to improve since its previous inspection, has some outstanding features, and meets all of the regulations. The curriculum and other activities match the ability range and interests of the pupils well. They clearly enjoy their education and make good progress because of effective teaching and thorough assessment. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as is behaviour, and pupils become confident, articulate, well-rounded young people while they are at the school. There are robust arrangements for safeguarding pupils and provision for their welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Parents and carers value highly the care provided and the attention given to promoting pupils' well-being and enjoyment of school.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good, having breadth and variety and securing the interest and enjoyment of pupils extremely well with some outstanding features. Detailed planning is supported by reference to the National Curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. It clearly identifies what pupils will learn to ensure the progression of knowledge and skills. Objectives are shared with pupils for each lesson and pupils have individual targets to help them focus on what they need to do to improve, to achieve their next learning goal. Pupils receive ongoing feedback on their work. Marking is always positive. Some excellent examples were seen of pupils also being given clear indicators of what they need to do to improve or to achieve next. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use this practice consistently and well. There is good coverage of all the required aspects of learning with an appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy and an excellent focus on developing pupils' language and communication skills. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage but do not routinely enjoy the same high quality experiences in all six areas of learning, indoors and outdoors. All pupils clearly enjoy their learning; they comment on the excellent range of activities they are given, including sports and regular nature walks. They particularly enjoy the many first-hand experiences they are offered, either through visits out to places of interest, or visits to the school by specialists such as a palaeontologist or an artist. Several were keen to share memorable experiences such as regular science experiments or the opportunity to work with a professional footballer. Partnerships add strongly to curriculum experiences, for example with other local schools to attend a 'Time Travelling' event and tree decoration at Belvoir Castle, and joining together with other schools to play violins at the 'Violins in the Vale' event.

Teaching and assessment are good. Some outstanding teaching was seen. Because teachers know their pupils exceptionally well, and class sizes are small, there is a high degree of individualisation, with tasks that are closely matched to the abilities of pupils in most cases. Very occasionally, pupils of different abilities are given the same task which for some is too easy and for others it is too hard. However, teaching enables pupils to make at least good progress while they are at the school as evidenced in most lessons and in the sampling of pupils' work. Teachers are particularly skilled at encouraging tenacity, independence and excellent learning behaviour. Though progress is rarely less than good, it is relatively slower when occasionally teachers talk for too long and do not give pupils enough time to practice what they have learned or to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems for themselves. However, these skills were seen to be promoted exceptionally well in the older years in science and mathematics where pupils regularly have practical and hands-on opportunities. They are able to solve complex mathematical problems and conduct science experiments. They are routinely given opportunities to lead their own learning. They are able to hypothesise, plan, investigate and record their results independently and with high levels of skill. The headteacher has begun to monitor pupils' attainment and progress across the school. She is able to evidence precisely the rates at which pupils make progress in different subjects and classes. As a

consequence, additional support and interventions have swiftly been put in place where progress has been seen to be slower so that no-one is left behind and everyone can reach their full potential. Evidence also confirms that pupils' attainment is high by the time they reach the older years where there is compelling evidence that pupil progress accelerates. A pupil new to English has been supported highly effectively to make excellent progress and is fully included in all that the school has to offer.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Providing the highest quality personal, social and health education is central to the school's ethos and highly valued by parents and carers. It begins on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage where pupils quickly learn respect and how to get on well together. Every day there are opportunities for pupils to reflect, discuss and debate a range of issues from the future of the environment to the importance of positive relationships and good behaviour. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the institutions of the United Kingdom through classroom discussion, assembly themes and regular visits for example from the police and fire service. Independence is promoted exceptionally well and pupils often direct their own learning, particularly in the older years. They have an extremely strong sense of right and wrong. They take responsibility for their decisions and understand that there are consequences to their actions. They are well motivated by the system of rewards and sanctions to promote best behaviour and play their part by keeping their peers in check if they need reminders, which they say is extremely rare. They are adamant that there is no bullying because everyone gets on so well together. One volunteered that 'everyone knows that this behaviour is intolerable at our school where we look after and support one another'. Their behaviour and manners are outstanding. They evidence their absolute enjoyment of school through high levels of attendance. One parent commented that her children 'cannot get to school quickly enough'. Enterprise opportunities include making and selling items and they are proud to raise money for charitable causes. They study the cultures and faiths of others, discuss them knowledgeably, show empathy and when asked, forcefully protested that discrimination and racism should not be tolerated. They advocate healthy eating and say they love to be physically active. Though there are currently no Year 6 pupils on roll, older pupils are already being prepared extremely well for transition to senior school. For example, through escorted visits to a variety of schools to help them make well informed choices and regular practice for entry exams. One pupil has already successfully passed the 11+ examination. Consequently none has any worries about the future and indeed they say the skills they are taught at school prepare them very well for their lives in the future.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very well supervised in school, between other venues used in the village and on trips out. There are no instances of bullying or other forms of harassment reported by pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, including

staff training and risk assessment, meet requirements and their implementation is highly rigorous and effective. There is a comprehensive policy for child protection, which is implemented very well.

The school has the required policies and practices that minimise risks to pupils' health and safety. Staff have the required training and attend to first aid and medical needs conscientiously and promptly. Practices in relation to fire safety and checking the safety of the premises are robust. Arrangements to promote exemplary behaviour are extremely effective and result in a supremely calm environment for learning. Pupils are encouraged extremely well to develop healthy lifestyles and to keep safe. They talk with secure knowledge and confidence about how to achieve this. The excellent emphasis placed on developing pupils' emotional health results in pupils saying that they are confident that they can talk to adults about any concerns. Strong and open relationships enable adults to pick up quickly when pupils are facing challenges and put the appropriate support in place. The school fulfils all its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All adults have been subject to the necessary checks to confirm their suitability to work with children. These are recorded on a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

School staff do all they can to maximise the use of the space available and to provide an effective environment for learning. Good use is made of the village hall for aspects of physical education. The pleasant gardens with a pond to the front, hard surface area to the rear, extensive field and all weather play area provide a safe environment for pupils to explore and play outdoors. All buildings are maintained to extremely high standards of maintenance and decoration throughout.

Provision of information

The extensive range of information provided to parents and carers by the helpful prospectus, school website and parents handbook is clear, accurate and up to date. The school operates an open door policy and there are three formal opportunities each year for parents and carers to consult with their children's teachers. Parents and carers report a high degree of satisfaction with the school's work.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').³

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that the most effective features of teaching and assessment seen are applied consistently across the school
- ensure that children in the Reception class enjoy the same high quality experiences in all six areas of learning both outdoors and indoors.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Selective day school		
Date school opened	September 2007		
Age range of pupils	4–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 10	Girls: 8	Total: 18
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 6,198		
Address of school	School Lane Colston Bassett Nottingham NG12 3FD		
Telephone number	01949 81118		
Email address	colstonbassettschool@live.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Hunt		
Proprietor	Liz Miller, John Miller and Mark Willmott		

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 Colston Bassett School, Nottingham, NG12 3FD

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed speaking with you about all the things which you said you like about your school and your views are really important to us.

We found that your school is good and has some outstanding features. We can see why you all enjoy coming to school. This is evident in your positive attitude to work and your exemplary behaviour. All the adults at school take excellent care to make sure you are very well nurtured and safe. As a result, you grow in confidence and become extremely well-rounded, independent young people. Because of the good quality individual support you all receive, the good teaching, and the exciting things you are given the opportunity to do, you make good and sometimes better progress in your work.

We would like your school to continue to improve, so we have asked them to do a few things.

- Make sure that all the teaching in school is equally as good as the best that we saw.
- Make sure that all the areas of learning outdoors are equally exciting and well taught in the Reception class.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Harvey
Her Majesty's Inspector