

Colneis Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124624
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380937
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	Roderick Passant

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	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Celia Davies
Headteacher	Jane Reed
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
School address	Colneis Road Felixstowe IP11 9HH
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Roderick Passant

Additional inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional inspector

Graham Stephens

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors saw 14 lessons taught by 12 staff. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to classrooms, heard a group of Year 6 pupils read and looked at a range of pupils' writing. 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 range of documentation associated with safeguarding and the school's plan for raising achievement. Inspectors met with older members of the school council and a group of Year 6 pupils, middle managers and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with the Chair and representatives of the Governing Body. The inspection team scrutinised the questionnaire responses from 150 pupils and 149 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than average primary school. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds but most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is broadly average and includes a few pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs, including pupils with a statement, are broadly average. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The school is federated with a local infant school. This is a 'soft' federation because both schools retain separate governing bodies. The headteacher and members of the senior leadership team work across both schools.

The school met floor, or minimum, targets set by the government for pupils' achievement in 2011.

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. Pupils gain from rich experiences and good teaching so that they are now making good year-on-year progress across the school. The school is not yet outstanding because leaders have yet to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, in order to accelerate pupils’ progress even further.
- Pupils’ progress continues to improve raising attainment further. Progress in mathematics in particular is now better. Pupils’ achievement is good.
- Good use of assessment to inform planning now underpins the many practical opportunities for learning and teachers’ enthusiastic approach. In the best lessons, planning was particularly sharp. In most lessons, work is clearly targeted to meet pupils’ needs. On occasions, the task does not challenge all pupils’ thinking sufficiently or lessons do not move on fast enough. Even in some good lessons, the pace for some pupils can drop a little because teachers do not intervene soon enough to move their learning on.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. Their very positive attitudes, good behaviour, enthusiasm and motivation underpin their learning. The school is a very inclusive and cohesive community.
- Accurate self-evaluation based on rigorous monitoring provides the foundation for the school’s capacity to improve. A sustained focus on improving teaching, particularly in mathematics, has led to tangible improvements. There is strong support for staff in terms of professional development but also strong accountability through well-embedded performance management. The school sets challenging targets for pupils’ progress. Individual pupils’ performance against these is checked carefully and additional support provided where progress shows signs of slowing down. The school has made good progress in the close monitoring of pupils’ progress since the last inspection. However, a difficulty with the software program used means that extracting information to

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gain an overview of pupils' progress is laborious.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and use an electronic system for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress so that all staff are more easily able to question the data in a variety of ways in order to provide rapid access to the 'big picture' of pupils' progress.
- Ensure that pupils make consistently good or better progress in all lessons and lift otherwise good teaching to outstanding by:
 - teachers making even more astute use of assessment information in their planning for the next steps in pupils' learning
 - making certain that tasks provide higher attaining pupils with additional challenge to their thinking
 - moving on quicker from starting points designed to review basic prior learning
 - intervening earlier in lessons to check on pupils' progress, redirect pupils' focus or re-energise specific groups of pupils rather than waiting until the end of the lesson.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils generally start school in Year 3 with attainment that is above average. Historically pupils made broadly satisfactory progress across the school with a degree of slippage, particularly in mathematics. In the past, attainment was a little above average. Pupils are now making good year-on-year progress that is working through the school. Year 6 pupils are on track to raise further their attainment in English and mathematics over previous years. Year 5 are well placed to attain well above average standards. Pupils make good progress in their reading and achieve well. Pupils, who read to inspectors enjoyed reading, knew their levels and what they needed to do in order to improve. All broke words down when they met an unfamiliar word but not all had a secure grasp of phonics. Attainment in reading is above average by Year 6.

In lessons, pupils are keen and well- motivated. In a mathematics class older pupils responded particularly well to the challenge of working out the volume of a container, engaging at a high level with the rigour of the subject as they manipulated the unknowns in the formula. In a science lesson, younger pupils observed what was happening very closely. The teacher, through skilled questioning, encouraged pupils to explain very clearly what they saw, promoting lively, interested and thoughtful discussion. Because pupils have good opportunities to apply their skills in open-ended contexts, older pupils have good levels of independence. The often practical nature of the tasks, such as working out a schedule to see all the feeding times for the animals in a zoo, gives additional relevance to the tasks and motivates pupils

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further.

Progress of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs shows further improvement so that they make good progress. This is because their progress is reviewed more frequently and there is now closer evaluation of the success of the increased range of interventions to support them. In addition, there has been more training for teaching assistants to further develop their skills. Additional resources have helped staff make concepts more concrete. Pupils who have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties make good progress in managing their behaviour because of staff's consistent approaches.

Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress. Their mathematical skills develop well as do technical aspects of writing and pupils' reading comprehension. However, they find writing description and the ability to read between the lines more difficult so their progress in these aspects shows some levelling off for a period. The school is working with the local authority to find further ways to accelerate pupils through this plateau period. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Last year all these pupils made at least the expected progress. Teachers ensure that they have equal access to all activities.

Most lessons challenge effectively pupils capable of higher attainment. Effective extension activities provide younger able mathematicians with additional challenge. Last year the school entered a small minority for the Level 6 tests (broadly the level of achievement expected of pupils in Year 9). Over half of these pupils were successful in mathematics. The school also entered a few pupils for the English tests at a similar level, with half of these attaining it.

There is no discernible difference between boys' and girls' attitudes in lessons. The work to improve mathematics has improved girls' attitudes to the subject. Inspectors agree with most parents and carers who say that their child is making good progress and that the school meets their child's needs.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have very positive relationships with their pupils. There is good teamwork with teaching assistants who provide skilled support. Activities are practically based and interesting with good opportunities for pupils to apply and use their skills. Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils to ensure that they explain their thinking or to challenge them further. Pupils are confident to express their views in extended answers using standard English. Teachers stress technical vocabulary well and encourage pupils to use the correct terms when they talk about, for example, their experiments. Teachers listen carefully to what pupils have to say, valuing their ideas. This fosters pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. Group reading successfully develops advanced reading skills because teachers question pupils effectively about the text. There are good resources for group reading.

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The use of specialised assessment materials and working with the new mathematics programme that the school has introduced to improve pupils' computation skills has led to improvements in teaching. Teachers are now clearer about planning for the next steps in pupils' learning. Overall, there is now a good match of work to the needs of the class. However, on occasion, there is insufficient additional challenge to stretch the thinking of higher attaining pupils and sometimes the pace of learning drops or could be sharpened. A key distinction between the best lessons and others is astute planning which structures very effectively the next steps in learning. Marking is good; it is encouraging and gives points for improvement.

Lessons provide effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect about themselves, for example, how they manage when they feel overwhelmed by varying emotions. It also provides good opportunities to explore how other people live and their beliefs. Major school events, such as the school production, provide extremely good opportunities to work together.

Inspectors agree with almost all parents and carers who say that teaching is good. Most pupils say that teaching is good at least most of the time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors agree with most parents and carers who say that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils conduct themselves extremely well around the school and in lessons. They show very positive attitudes to their learning. Their level of engagement does slip a little in those few lessons where teaching is satisfactory. Good relationships with adults underpin their learning. The school is friendly and pupils get on well with, and care for, each other. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. School records indicate that this is rare. When it does occur, it is usually in the form of teasing and pupils say that it is sorted quickly when they report it to an adult. The school has also tackled pupils' use of 'gay' as a term of disdain in their everyday speech. Racist incidents are extremely rare and properly recorded and reported.

The large majority of pupils say that they feel safe in school and all parents and carers say that the school keeps their child safe. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Consistent approaches and use of specialist agencies to help pupils develop self-control work well for a small number who find it difficult to manage their anger or behaviour. Consequently lessons are rarely disrupted though a small minority of parents say that poor behaviour disrupts their child's lessons.

Attendance is high.

Leadership and management

There has been a sustained focus in developing the quality of teaching in order to

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improve pupils' progress. The focus on mathematics teaching and more structured progression in pupils' computation skills, along with the use of specialised assessment materials, has sharpened teachers' planning to meet pupils' needs in mathematics and other subjects too. Teaching and progress have improved well since the last inspection. This shows the school's good capacity to improve further. The school's leadership and staff are ambitious for the school and pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school; staff are reflective and want to improve their skills. The governing body provides strong strategic leadership. It is both supportive and appropriately challenging. The governing body is prepared to ask the school's leadership challenging questions based on first-hand knowledge of the school. It also ensures that the school meets the government's requirements with regard to safeguarding. The 'soft' federation of the two schools helps smooth the transition of pupils from the infant to the junior school because there are coherent, shared policies and expectations.

The curriculum provides pupils with rich experiences and good opportunities to use and apply their skills through its practical approaches. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is highly inclusive. It challenges any discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. The work in mathematics has enhanced girls' attitudes to the subject. The school tracks the progress of all pupils closely. While the current system is laborious, the tracking and evaluation of pupils' progress individually and for specific groups ensures that there are no significant differences.

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.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Colneis Junior School, Felixstowe, IP11 9HH

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. I would particularly like to thank those pupils who gave up their time to complete the questionnaire and talk to us. What you had to say was very helpful in helping us come to a view about your school. I am only sorry to miss your performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

This is a good school because you do many interesting things and you make good progress. You attain standards which are a little above those in most schools but this is now improving further. You have skilled teachers and teaching is good. I asked the headteacher to ensure that teachers' planning always provides you with the challenge and support you need to make good or better progress. I also asked her to ensure that your teachers check on your progress in lessons a little more frequently rather than waiting until the end of the lesson.

The school is very friendly and you get on well with each other. Your behaviour around the school is very good and in lessons, you are keen, enthusiastic and want to do well. The headteacher and staff keep a close view on the progress that you make and check carefully to see if anyone is slipping behind. The computer system that they use has problems so that they have to check the data by hand. I have asked the headteacher to invest in a program so that they are able to use the data that they have on your progress in lots of different ways. This will help them get more easily a big picture of how different groups, such as boys and girls, are getting on.

The headteacher and staff are ambitious for the school and clearly want you to do as well as you can. The school has improved since it was last inspected. You can help it improve even more by continuing to take every advantage of what it offers you and by you continuing to aim high and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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