

# Colwich CofE (C) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124244
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359613
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	131
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Clay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Main Road Colwich, Stafford ST17 0XD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 881286
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six lessons, sampled a further three, and saw six teachers and two teaching assistants teach. They also met with parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies. Inspectors also analysed the responses to the 69 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the school doing to improve writing and to reduce the gaps between boys and girls at both key stages?
- How well are literacy skills, especially writing, promoted in all subjects, and how is progress assured in the different subjects brought together in topic work?
- How well do information and communication technology (ICT) skills support learning across the curriculum?

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. Pupils are taught in single-age groups from Reception to Year 3. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. However, the small numbers in each year group mean that these proportions vary from year to year. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school had a subject inspection for mathematics in March 2010. Before and after school clubs and a pre-school playgroup operate on the school site. They are privately run and subject to a separate inspection. The school has Healthy Schools status.

**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: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Children get off to a good start in Reception, where they make good progress. By Year 6, attainment is high and achievement excellent. The outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils results in pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities mostly reaching at least average standards by the end of Year 6. These high standards have been sustained over several years. They are the outcome of exceptionally well-focused leadership and management, which have led to excellent teaching and brought about exceptional improvement in almost all areas of school life since the previous inspection. The improvement continues with the recently established, well-planned creative curriculum which has greatly increased pupils' motivation to learn.

Literacy skills, including writing, are fully integrated into the curriculum, giving a purpose to writing and raising pupils' enthusiasm for it. Pupils' work and recent assessment data show that this approach is rapidly closing the gaps between boys' and girls' learning, including in writing. The school is rigorous in its approach to self-evaluation which, although mostly accurate, is at times over-cautious. It has a clear understanding of what it needs to do to consolidate its success and become even better. Taken together, all of this shows its excellent capacity for further improvement. Within this very positive picture, it still has to complete work on establishing assessment procedures in the different subjects brought together in topic work. Additionally, the use of ICT as a tool for learning across the curriculum is not fully embedded. Plans are underway to address both of these issues.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Levels of attendance are high and behaviour is excellent. This contributes greatly to pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils have a strong voice in the school and a highly developed sense of fairness for all. They very much appreciate the calm, respectful learning environment in which they work and play. They describe the school as a 'peace' school, where everyone is treated equally and where they 'learn as well as have fun'. They are reflective and caring, and contribute greatly to school, church and community life. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. All of this is underpinned by the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for all pupils, including those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Pupils leave this school as mature youngsters, exceptionally well prepared for their future.

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

- Complete the work on how best to assess pupils' progress in different subjects as they are brought together in topic work.
  - Embed the use of ICT within the curriculum so that it becomes a natural tool for learning across all subjects.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

In most years, children start Reception with the levels of attainment expected for their age. Their good progress ensures they start Year 1 above average. Attainment has consistently been significantly above average in Year 2 for a number of years. In Year 6, it has been so for four of the past five years, including the last three. Pupils' work, data held by the school, and the support being given to pupils who are on the borderline at different levels, show that pupils are on track to reach similarly high standards again this year. This reflects the excellent progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There has been good improvement in writing recently. Boys are still sometimes slow to start writing, often spending too much time on the date and title. However, their enthusiasm is increasing, and assessed pieces of writing show that they write imaginatively and engage the reader, with a good command of vocabulary, when writing has a purpose and interests them. Pupils recognise the impact of the new curriculum on this, saying that 'topic work makes (writing) more interesting'. The improvement in writing is evident in Year 2 also, where, for example, pupils wrote about 'Fred's Worries'. Boys and girls both articulated these clearly in well structured, well sequenced sentences with mostly accurate punctuation and good attempts at spelling. Mathematics remains strong, as at the time of the subject inspection. This was evident as Year 6 pupils engaged in highly motivating problem-solving work where they had to use logical reasoning to build a tower and then solve real life problems related to calculating the area and perimeter of complex shapes. Pupils persevere well in all of their tasks, helping each other and showing a strong determination to do well. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. Their use of ICT skills is not as well embedded in their work in school, although they report that they often use computers for research, including at home.

Pupils are reflective and caring. They readily accept responsibility, for example, as school and class councillors. They respect and value the rights of others and see everyone as equal, regardless of faith, ethnicity or culture, and readily challenge any other form of harassment. They are adamant that there is no bullying, that it would not be tolerated and are confident that they can turn to any member of staff should they have any concerns. They feel listened to and valued, and they appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions. Their strong sense of right and wrong is fostered through their work in school, with the church and in the local community, and their developing understanding of communities outside the area, and in different parts of the world. The high uptake of sporting and exercise opportunities, and an excellent understanding of healthy eating underpin the pupils' exceptional appreciation of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Parents cooperate with the school in this, ensuring that when their children have packed lunches, they too are mostly healthy.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is never less than good and it was outstanding in half of the lessons observed during the inspection. Pupils' learning is tailored well to their different learning needs, and, as far as possible, it is based on well-focused practical activities that provide a sense of awe and wonder, engaging and motivating pupils, and giving a purpose to their learning. The creative curriculum ensures that subjects are brought together in a meaningful way that enables pupils to see that what they learn in one subject benefits their learning in another. Lessons are readily adjusted in response to how well pupils are learning. Teachers know their pupils well, and pupils respond very positively to the high expectations teachers have of their behaviour and work rate. The push to ensure more-able pupils always reach the higher levels of which they are capable has resulted in teachers planning additionally challenging work for these pupils and starting them on it as early as possible in lessons. Occasionally, pupils are kept together as a whole group for too long, reducing the time they have to pursue and demonstrate their learning, but this is relatively rare.

The procedures for assessing, tracking and improving pupils' learning in English and mathematics are well established and very effective. Marking is especially good. It leaves pupils in no doubt as to what they need to do to improve, and pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'blue for better' and 'tickled pink' approach. They also engage in 'learning conversations' about their work, recording for themselves what they think they have done

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well and how they might improve, prior to discussing this with their teachers. This, and their responses to marking comments, ensures that they understand the next steps in their learning. It also leaves teachers in no doubt as to what they need to plan for next. Procedures for assessing work in other subjects are not as well developed, although the school has clear plans to improve this. It has already made a start on science. Overall, the very well targeted support given to all pupils, from the least to the most able, and for those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, enables pupils to make the best of what the school has to offer. Pupils and their parents and carers have a high degree of confidence in the school to care for, support, guide and advise them effectively. This contributes greatly to the pupils' excellent academic and personal progress.

The curriculum is enriched with memorable experiences that include an excellent range of visits, visitors and well-attended extra-curricular activities. The school has involved pupils and their parents well in ensuring the curriculum meets pupils' learning needs. The 'creative curriculum suggestion boxes' around school provide a good avenue for this, as do the brainstorming sessions pupils engage in at the start of a topic. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a tool for learning across all subjects.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Consistently high expectations are at the heart of all of the school's work. Driven by the headteacher, this ambitious vision is shared by all staff. Several have taken on new responsibilities this year, approaching them with a well developed understanding of how improvement is brought about by effective monitoring, accurate self-evaluation and clear priorities. Targets are challenging, everyone is working purposefully towards them, and weaknesses are quickly identified and successfully tackled. The strategic planning and deployment of staff and resources in order to realise priorities are supported by good governance, which ensures all statutory requirements are met and the school is held accountable for its outcomes. Excellent partnerships with other schools, the church and external agencies contribute greatly to pupils' learning and personal development, and ensure the pupils' smooth transition onto the next phase of their education.

The school rigorously pursues equality of opportunity. It has successfully tackled the variations in performance between boys and girls and it gives due attention to promoting and celebrating the gifts and talents of individual pupils. The school has an excellent understanding of its own religious, ethnic and socio-economic context, and that of the community it serves. Its developing links with schools abroad are raising pupils' awareness of the global community. The governing body's action plan is aimed at improving pupils'

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understanding of the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom. Relatively speaking, this is the weakest aspect of its community cohesion work.

The school adopts recommended good practice across all areas of safeguarding. Its vetting procedures are rigorous and all training, including for child protection, is up to date. Regular risk assessments take account of the views of pupils and parents. The pupils' excellent understanding in this area is demonstrated in comments such as 'this school is a very safe place to be' and 'no-one gets in and no-one gets out' once they have settled in class in the morning.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and thoroughly enjoy the many exciting activities prepared for them. They learn and develop well because adults are meticulous in assessing, tracking and recording their progress, and using this information in planning. Children are already aware of their targets and most talk confidently about what they are learning. Leadership and management are good. Excellent communication with parents, good links with pre-school providers and excellent transition between Reception and Year 1 all ensure children's learning is continuous. Behaviour, too, is excellent. Children show good levels of respect for each other, adults and their environment, and they work and play well together or on their own. The majority can write their own names, form letters correctly and make good attempts at writing simple sentences. They are prepared well for writing activities, for example, through role play and by recording and evaluating their re-telling of a familiar story before writing it down. Children successfully learn to order and count numbers and more-able children can already count in twos. Good curricular planning ensures a good balance between adult-led activities and those children select or initiate



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themselves. In the latter, adults sometimes miss opportunities to move learning on as it occurs.

Children's welfare and well-being are paramount in all of the school's work. At present, because of the physical environment, children do not have ready access to outdoors for spontaneous learning, and the outdoor area is not routinely set up as an extension of the classroom. Nevertheless, staff do their best by planning carefully for its use on a rota basis to ensure children are well supervised at all times. The school has plans to improve children's access to and the resources for outdoor learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The return from the parents' and carers' questionnaires was higher than in most primary schools. Parents and carers express overwhelmingly positive views about almost every aspect of the school. Several respondents said they had 'nothing but praise' for the school, commenting on, for example, the 'very good mix of rewards and discipline', which 'gives children a clear understanding of what is expected'. Other typical comments were that the school 'exceeds expectation', 'fosters enthusiasm for learning' and that teachers go 'beyond the call of duty' to help the children. Inspection findings endorse these positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Colwich CoFE (C) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	72	19	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	80	14	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	51	31	45	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	55	29	42	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	67	23	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	58	26	38	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	59	25	36	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	57	22	32	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	54	30	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	46	33	48	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	52	30	43	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	65	23	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	67	22	32	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Colwich CoFE (C) Primary School, Stafford, ST17 0XD**

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school and for talking to me about your work. As you know, I came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. It was good to hear how proud you are of your school and that you consider it to be a 'peace' school because of the calm atmosphere and the high levels of support you receive.

Your school is outstanding. It is a very happy and very caring school where every one of you is valued and helped to make excellent progress. Your high levels of attendance show how much you enjoy school and do not want to miss anything. All of this helps you to get off to a good start in Reception, and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. You are right when you say teachers make learning 'interesting and fun' because of the many different ways in which they teach you. They make excellent use of what they know about how well each of you is doing when they plan your lessons. You told me the new curriculum is really good because you get the chance to influence what you learn, and that topic work is 'especially interesting'. You certainly work very hard on this in lessons and at home, and persevere with the many different challenges put your way. Keep this up and you will continue to do really well.

Your headteacher and the staff are very good at identifying what needs to happen so that you can make the best possible at all times. Currently, they are working towards making the new curriculum as outstanding as everything else, and I have therefore asked them to:

- complete the work on finding ways to assess your progress in all subjects
- give you more opportunities to use computers to further your learning across the curriculum.

You can help by continuing to be happy learners and by keeping up your very high standards of behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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