

Colkirk Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121112
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358930
Inspection dates	30 September 2010–1 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob Lucking
Headteacher	Mr Paul Rundle
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 12 lessons and observed three teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils and spoke to parents and carers informally in the playground. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 23 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- What the school is doing to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- The contribution made by teaching assistants to pupils' learning.
- The impact on outcomes for pupils of changes in the school's leaders and managers, and in the membership of the governing body.

Information about the school

Colkirk is much smaller than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The governing body runs a daily breakfast club.

There are three classes in the school, one containing Reception children and Years 1 and 2, one containing pupils in Years 3 and 4 and one containing pupils in Years 5 and 6. The headteacher took up post in January 2009 and a senior teacher was appointed from September 2010. There have been recent changes to the governing body, including the appointment of a new Chair.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Colkirk Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a satisfactory school. The headteacher has brought stability and clear direction after a period of uncertainty, with recent appointments strengthening the leadership team and the governing body. Pupils' attainment is average and they make satisfactory progress, although there are inconsistencies in the provision that slow the rate of improvement. In particular, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to attain the higher levels of performance. Pupils' personal development is good, with an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyle choices. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school's work, with one commenting, 'A caring ethos is definitely promoted.'

While all pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and an increasing number are doing better than this, the rate of improvement is not fast enough. This is because teachers do not make the best use of day-to-day assessment to plan next steps in pupils' learning that will enable them to improve rapidly. Variations in the quality of marking mean that some pupils are unclear about what they have to do to improve, and they do not all know their curricular targets. A focus on improving attainment in mathematics and science in 2010 was successful, however, with pupils using and applying their knowledge and understanding more effectively, and performance improving in national tests at the end of Year 6.

Teaching is satisfactory, with a lack of pace slowing learning in some lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, and pupils are very willing to learn, especially when actively involved in the classroom. At times questioning challenges and extends pupils' learning, but too often it is not probing enough. While teaching assistants who work with individuals with special educational needs and/or difficulties provide good support, the effectiveness of support staff generally is inconsistent. Teaching assistants do not always enhance pupils' learning because of weaknesses in subject knowledge or training, which reduces their impact on pupils' progress, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Changes to the curriculum make it more relevant to pupils, with an emphasis on the local environment, and good enrichment ensures there are plenty of clubs and visits for pupils to enjoy. Good pastoral care means that all pupils are included well in the life of the school, contributing to a happy harmonious community.

Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop derived from sound self-evaluation procedures. The development of the roles of subject leaders is at an early stage because of recent changes in teaching staff. The governing body supports the school well, and works increasingly effectively as a team, but its monitoring role is not rigorous or systematic enough. The school has made steady improvement since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress from satisfactory to at least good, by:
 - using day-to-day assessment to plan good opportunities to move pupils' forward in their learning
 - ensuring that pupils know the next steps to improve through sharing challenging targets and consistent marking with them
 - challenging more able pupils sufficiently to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Ensure all teaching is at least good, by:
 - injecting sufficient pace into lessons
 - using support staff effectively to enhance learning in every class
 - asking probing questions to extend pupils' understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body, by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders
 - ensuring that the governing body fulfils its monitoring role rigorously and systematically.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils mainly enjoy their learning and achieve satisfactorily. Year 5 and 6 pupils devised an entertaining and informative presentation for parents and carers on energy conservation, including their own take on the well known song, 'This little light of mine, I'm going to switch it off.' Pupils in Year 3 and 4 drew 'hearsay' animals from clues, based on their studies of the embroidery of Mary Queen of Scots at a local stately home. Such practical activities involve the pupils well in their learning and promote good progress, but this is not always the case. Too often work is not pitched precisely enough for pupils' differing abilities, or does not take sufficient account of their prior learning, resulting in slower progress.

Children join the school with skills and abilities that are often in line with or slightly above those expected, and make satisfactory progress in each year group. By the end of Year 6, attainment is average in English, mathematics and science. At times, more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to produce work that would lead to higher levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily, with some good support for those with statements of special educational needs.

Pupils say they feel safe at school, and are involved in carrying out risk assessments to ensure that the premises are safe. They make helpful suggestions for how the environment could be made even safer, for example by dividing the playground up into active and quiet zones. Their understanding of keeping healthy is excellent, and the vast majority take plenty of exercise, including participation in a wide range of after-school sports clubs. Pupils have been active in making their views known to the school's caterers

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about how meals could be healthier and lunchtimes improved. They contribute well to the school and local community, for example as buddies for the younger children or planting crocuses on the village green. Behaviour is good. One pupil said: 'We're all good at different things. We can all help each other out.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with strengths in the moral and social aspects. They have limited direct experience of people from other cultures and traditions. Their basic skills are satisfactory, preparing them soundly for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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?

Teachers use technology well to interest and engage pupils, who are keen to take an active part in lessons and are able to work independently and cooperatively. For example, pupils have worked together to produce electronic presentations about energy conservation. The pace of learning slows when teachers talk for too long, or when planning does not take sufficient account of pupils' needs. More able pupils sometimes find the work is too easy for them. Teaching assistants do not always enhance learning because they either do too much for the pupils, or lack the experience or expertise to help them to move forward. Teachers are growing increasingly confident in using data to help them track how well pupils are doing and to intervene when any are at risk of falling behind. However, they do not make pupils sufficiently aware of how they can improve by drawing their attention to targets, or through consistently helpful marking.

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The curriculum is at a relatively early stage of development, and has become more relevant for pupils. For example, in studying World War II, pupils have been finding out about how it affected Norfolk. Their understanding is enhanced by regular trips to places of interest, such as local manor houses and nature reserves. The wide range of clubs contributes well to pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school. The breakfast club provides a good nourishing start to the day and an opportunity for pupils to socialise. The provision of care, guidance and support is good, with the school catering for a variety of pupils' needs, and helping children who may be vulnerable to overcome barriers to learning. The school works hard to promote attendance, maintaining it at average levels. There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although those with statements of special educational needs are cared for well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has steered the school through choppy waters and brought stability, giving staff a clear sense of purpose and direction. He has won the respect of the school and local community. The school is beginning to increase the momentum of improvement with more robust systems in place for measuring pupils' progress, and strategic plans based on the main areas to develop. Appropriate steps are taken to improve teaching and learning, with regular observations of lessons and clear advice to staff. Teachers are new to their leadership roles, so have not yet become established in them. The governing body is satisfactory in its effectiveness, with the new Chair encouraging governors to reflect on their work and streamline their activity to become more efficient. Its monitoring role is too informal, as there is no systematic way of checking the impact of leaders' actions.

The school engages well with parents and carers, actively seeking their views, for example through the notice board in the hall where parents can add comments and suggestions. Family days and parent workshops encourage parents and carers to get involved in the life of the school. The school ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and staff have received current training. Leaders and managers promote equal opportunities satisfactorily, carefully tracking the progress of different groups of pupils, and intervening to narrow any emerging gaps in performance. There are inconsistencies in aspects of the provision, such as the extent to which more able pupils are challenged and how well pupils understand what they need to do to improve. There is satisfactory promotion of community cohesion. The school knows its local context well and reaches out effectively to different groups nearby. It is beginning to develop links further afield, for example with schools in Sweden and France, but this work is at an early stage.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a good start in identifying strengths in the provision and areas to improve. Children settle quickly and become part of the mixed-age class, supported well by their older classmates. However, they do not have enough opportunities to make independent choices, as too much is laid on for them. Activities are exciting and enjoyable and children participate in them enthusiastically, as when they 'composed' music and sang their own songs, the lyrics of which, in one case, went something like, 'I love my headteacher, I love my teacher, I love that man standing over there!' Not all support staff are fully confident in Early Years Foundation Stage practice and do not sufficiently encourage pupils to develop their language through focused activities or role play. While good use is made of the outside area, with a wide range of learning opportunities made available to children in all areas of the curriculum, the outdoor space is not clearly defined, comprising of part of the playground and the area around a mobile classroom.

Good use is made of assessment to measure how children are progressing, with observations and photographs recorded in 'learning journeys'. Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points, which are generally in line with those expected nationally, and leave the Reception class with average attainment.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Over a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires, which is similar to that found in other primary schools. The vast majority of responses were positive. A few parents and carers queried the progress their children were making and how well the school supported them in helping their children. Inspectors investigated these matters. They found that while pupils make satisfactory progress overall, this could be better. The school works hard to engage with parents and carers and show them how they can help their children at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Colkirk Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 65 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	52	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	35	14	61	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	26	14	61	3	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	35	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	35	11	48	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	39	13	57	1	4	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)	8	35	15	65	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	35	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	22	16	70	1	4	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	39	13	57	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	35	13	57	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	39	13	57	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Colkirk Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Fakenham, NR21 7NW

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and sharing your views with us. Colkirk is a satisfactory school. It does some things well, but other things could be better. Here are some of its strengths.

Your understanding of how to make healthy choices is outstanding, and you take plenty of exercise.

You feel safe at school and behave well, looking after the younger children.

You get involved in supporting your school and the local community.

The school cares for you well, especially if you are facing difficulties.

The school works well with parents and carers.

Some of you could make better progress, so we have asked your teachers to do the following things.

Give you work that is just right for you and show you how to improve by making sure you understand your targets and through comments in your books.

Make lessons as interesting as possible by setting a good pace, using teaching assistants well to help you and asking questions that really make you think.

Help teachers who lead subjects to check how well you are doing and involve the governing body in finding out more about the school's work.

All of you can help by telling your teachers what you enjoy learning and where you think you need extra help. Our best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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