

London Colney Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117146
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379357
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Theresa Clements
Headteacher	Lisa Valla
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
School address	Alexander Road London Colney AL2 1JG
Telephone number	01727 823283
Fax number	01727 822785
Email address	admin@londoncolneyjm.herts.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	13–14 September 2011
Inspection number	379357

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed seven teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school improvement partner and groups of pupils, parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking information, the school development plan, monitoring reports and pupils' workbooks. The inspection questionnaires were analysed, including 43 from parents and carers.

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

- Do teachers' have high enough expectations to promote consistent progress among all groups in reading, writing and mathematics, and especially for boys and the potentially higher attainers?
- Does the school make sufficient use of tracking and pupils' targets to check progress and raise achievement?
- How effective are the school's strategies for promoting attendance?
- How effective are the leadership and management of English and mathematics?

Information about the school

This small primary school is situated within a residential area of the village. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and others are White British. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and the main languages spoken at home are Bengali, Sylhetti and Arabic. A few pupils are from Traveller families. The school has a high number of pupils who join or leave other than at the usual times during the school year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and very few pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school has the Healthy School status.

The school shares its site with a nursery and children's centre which is inspected separately.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has improved considerably since the last inspection under the watchful eye of the headteacher, who is the driving force behind the significant changes and innovations. The school is highly inclusive and the pastoral care is excellent. It has good links with families and helps them to feel involved with their children's learning. Parental comments endorse this and one said, '...moving (my children) to London Colney Primary School is the best thing I have ever done for them.'

Achievement is good. The school's very high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds includes many who learn English as an additional language. Hence, there is rightly a strong focus on the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This has helped staff to improve attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly over the last two years. Children make good progress in the Reception class and throughout the school. Pupils' attainment is broadly average by Year 6 in English and mathematics, although the inspection evidence shows that reading comprehension is an area that is less secure than other areas at both key stages. There are also some inconsistencies in pupils' spelling in Years 3 to 6. Even so, all pupils, including boys and the higher attainers, achieve well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they make excellent contributions to the local schools and neighbourhood, and also to overseas communities such as those in India. Attendance is broadly average, but there are some persistent absences and missed days due to families taking holidays during term-time. Pupils behave well, taking on responsibilities willingly.

Staff celebrate diversity well and value all pupils equally. They treat them with respect and the school functions as a happy, harmonious environment. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection and is now good. All staff have high expectations and they ensure that pupils make consistent progress. Assessment is good: pupils have clear targets to help them learn and teachers' marking usually identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work. Pupils are provided with a good curriculum and a wide range of after-school clubs to help them learn. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding: parental comments confirm this by saying that adults are 'fantastic' and they are, '...lovely staff; helpful and supportive.' The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances very effectively and helps them make good progress, as seen in the good use of a specialised reading programme which has had a significant impact on learning. Staff actively

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

promote good community cohesion and are developing links with global communities to enhance learning even further.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leadership team are dedicated and passionate about the school and provide a strong sense of ambition and purpose. They all work hard for the benefit of the pupils, and subject leadership is good, especially in English and mathematics. Self-evaluation is accurate and the governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The Chair of the Governing Body is a frequent visitor and liaises well with the headteacher to ensure that the governors provide good critical challenge for the school. Based on its good track record of improvement, rising standards and strong leadership, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in reading comprehension at Key Stages 1 and 2 so that a larger proportion of pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6 by:
 - developing pupils' understanding of the meaning in written texts
 - encouraging pupils to read more often for enjoyment.
- Improve pupils' knowledge of spelling in Years 3 to 6 so that they become more accurate when writing independently by:
 - helping them to develop a clearer understanding of spelling patterns
 - increasing the regularity of spelling tests to help pupils consolidate their knowledge.
- Improve attendance by:
 - rigorously seeking ways to promote the good attendance of all pupils
 - working with parents and carers to reduce the number of absences and emphasise the benefits of pupils' regular attendance at school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school has worked hard to drive up standards, and its determination is paying off because attainment is rising year-on-year. Even so, outcomes are affected by the small size of the cohorts and variations in attendance figures caused by high mobility and long-term absences. A very high proportion of Bengali, Sylheti and Arabic speakers are new to the English language when they first start school and basic skills are often limited on entry. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6. The inspection evidence confirms that the school is reducing previous differences in performance between boys and girls. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently working at levels that are broadly similar to those expected for their age in English and mathematics. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 2, on the topic of 'Olympic Mascots', pupils were able to discuss their ideas animatedly in a 'think-pair-

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

share’ session which helped them to develop their speaking and listening skills very effectively. All groups of pupils make good progress overall, but there are sometimes too many spelling mistakes in the workbooks of pupils at Key Stage 2 and a lack of understanding of how to recognise spelling patterns. In addition, pupils at both key stages do not have secure skills in reading comprehension and some are not avid readers; this leads to a lack of understanding of everyday words such as ‘urban’ and ‘rural’, as seen in Year 4 when the teacher’s good rapport and gentle sense of humour helped the pupils to increase their knowledge steadily. Pupils enjoy learning and concentrate well. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils used two- and three-digit numbers confidently when solving problems of division. The higher attaining boys achieved exceptionally well when faced with very challenging tasks using four digits. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are integrated well to help them make good progress. For instance, they achieve well in reading sessions with the inclusion coordinator, benefiting from her skilled questioning techniques on texts such as, ‘Sam Goes To School’.

Behaviour is good and pupils say that they feel safe. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, play harmoniously together and are very tolerant of each other’s beliefs and cultures. Pupils understand how to live healthily by taking regular exercise and eating nutritious food. Parents and carers agree that their children are doing well, ‘My child has become more confident since attending this school.’ Pupils greatly enjoy contributing to the school and local community through the school council and by acting as monitors. They develop their basic skills well, although inconsistent attendance adversely affects the learning of some pupils. Travelling families are keen to send their children to this school and do so whenever they are in the village.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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

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

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

The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and learning support assistants work well together as a strong team. They have high expectations of the pupils and relationships are pleasant and positive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and often have a cheerful rapport with their classes, particularly during practical activities. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson on persuasive text, the teacher’s lively introduction and role-play made learning fun for everyone. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 were enthralled by their teacher’s good use of his voice when reading the story of ‘Perseus’. Staff guide small groups of pupils very carefully and give close attention to individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Day-to-day assessment and tracking procedures for measuring progress are used effectively to tailor work and make sure that pupils have challenging targets to help them learn. Marking is good and makes effective use of praise. Plenty of help is given to pupils to help them improve their work. By the time they reach the top end of the school, pupils can evaluate their own work confidently.

The school’s broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is planned well. It provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities based on a themed approach to learning. There are good links between subjects such as English, science and geography. Activities are adapted well for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they have equal access to the curriculum. Personal, social and health education are promoted well, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their independence. Pupils also benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended.

The school’s outstanding emphasis on the care, guidance and support of pupils means that pastoral care is excellent. All staff know the needs of pupils and their families very well and take great care of them. They provide well-targeted support and liaise closely to make sure that pupils are supported sensitively, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable because of their circumstances. They help pupils to learn effectively and they support many families from minority ethnic backgrounds who have little or no knowledge of English by providing practical help and translation services. The school does all it can to promote good attendance and it follows up absences diligently. It has effective plans to improve its attendance figures still further. Transition arrangements are well organised for pupils who leave at the end of Year 6.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

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

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has steered the school carefully through a period of change and staffing difficulties. Her energy and determination have led to some significant improvements in the school, such as the eradication of weak teaching and the raising of standards. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher, who provides an excellent role model for her colleagues. There is now a strong sense of ambition and drive in the school and the senior leadership team work well together as a leading group of professionals. Accurate self-evaluation helps them to set challenging targets for the future. Subject leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully, especially in reading and writing, and these aspects are rightly included in the new school development plan. Such monitoring ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and keeps a close check on how well the school is doing to make sure that it provides good value for money.

The school's good systems and procedures for safeguarding children help staff to ensure child protection and support those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Effective procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, risk assessments and regular staff training ensure that the school maintains pupils' safety. Equality and diversity are celebrated well and community cohesion is promoted effectively. The school has good links with local schools and with national groups and global communities to enhance pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural world in which they live.

The school successfully encourages parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning and it provides plenty of information to help them support their children at home. Parental comments indicate that they appreciate this and feel valued by staff. One wrote: 'The headteacher and the teachers are running the school very well. I am very happy with my children's progress and the children are very happy too.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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

tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry varies from year-to-year but the school’s data shows that it is generally below expectations for age when children first start. They make good progress and achieve well to attain most of the expected goals by the time they begin Year 1, although their skills in reading, writing and calculation are sometimes less secure than in other areas. Children settle happily at the beginning of the day and play well together, listening carefully to adults’ instructions and behaving sensibly. They participate eagerly in physical activities and enjoy using a good range of resources such as construction toys. All children show curiosity and they eagerly explore the world around them. Most children understand that eating healthy food is good for them and all enjoy eating fruit at snack time. The good teaching means that children develop their early literacy and numeracy skills effectively. This is because caring, kindly staff provide them with plenty of exciting activities. Children’s records, known as ‘Learning Journeys’, are updated regularly and are shared openly with parents and carers. Adults are calm and patient: they work together as a good team to support and engage the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the many who learn English as an additional language. For example, staff were exceedingly patient with the children and supported each one individually during their first venture into the computer suite. Assessment is used well to guide planning, although there is a little inconsistency between the curricular documents and class timetables. Nevertheless, activities are adapted well to suit the needs of individuals. Leadership and management are good because the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage, who is also the deputy headteacher, works closely the Reception staff to oversee and develop the provision for these youngest children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed their satisfaction with the education provided by the school. They feel that

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

the school is led and managed well and that staff make sure that children are safe. Parental comments included praise for the headteacher and the staff, and confirmed that their children enjoy school. There were no significant concerns raised by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at London Colney 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	63	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	67	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	29	67	13	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	60	16	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	63	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	60	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	60	15	35	1	2	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)	26	60	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	53	17	40	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	60	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	56	13	30	2	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	63	15	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	28	65	13	30	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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"> ■ 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.



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of London Colney Primary School, London Colney, AL2 1JG

Thank you for being so kind to us and helping us to learn about your school when we visited you recently. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You go to a good school.
- You make good progress in your learning and achieve well by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, although some of you could do better in reading and spelling.
- You told us that you enjoy learning about new topics.
- We think that your understanding of how to be kind and thoughtful towards others is excellent. Well done!
- Your behaviour is good and those of you in the school council take your responsibilities seriously: you all contribute to the school and its local community extremely well. Well done for raising money for children in other countries such as India.
- You understand that healthy food and regular exercise are good for you.
- The teachers and the learning support assistants take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe when you are in school.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school well, and is supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, senior staff and all the other adults and governors.

We have asked your teachers to help you do better in reading and spelling. We have also asked them to encourage you to attend school regularly so that you do not miss any lessons.

You can help too by making sure that you come to school every day during term-time and always do your best and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**