

Costessey Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120801
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380105
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike McCormack
Headteacher	Anthony Hull
Date of previous school inspection	01 November 2007
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft

Additional Inspector

Robert Miller

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 13 teachers and parts of other lessons. All of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. In addition to observing the school's work, the inspector looked at information about pupils' attainment and progress and about the management of their safety and behaviour. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and the views expressed in 50 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and others returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is a little larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are low. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus is below average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. The school holds National Support School status and is a key partner in one of the Norfolk Teaching School groups. The headteacher provides management support for other schools in Norfolk.

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	1

Key findings

- This is a good school. As a result of outstanding leadership and management it is improving rapidly. The school is not yet outstanding because the proportion of pupils attaining at higher than expected levels is not as high in writing as in reading and mathematics. Parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. Typical of the views expressed was the comments of two parents who said, 'A great school all round' and 'The staff are friendly and approachable...my children are making good progress and look forward to going to school every day.'
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is above average. Attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly average, but rising. Even so, the grammar, punctuation and skills of some pupils to write in extended forms are not yet developed well enough for them to attain at higher than expected levels. Some their written work is not as tidy as it should be.
- Teaching is good. The basic skills of reading and mathematics are taught effectively. Lessons engage pupils' interest and they are enthusiastic learners. Assessments of pupils' progress are accurate. Teachers' marking is a current focus for development to ensure that pupils are well informed about how to make their work even better.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils apply themselves well during lessons. Staff manage behaviour well, to the extent that instances of inappropriate behaviour seldom occur.
- Leadership and management are outstanding and are making a significant contribution to school improvement. Particular strengths include the continued professional development of teachers to improve their skills and the support the school provides for teachers from other schools who visit the school's training centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Increase the proportion of pupils who, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, are attaining at higher than expected levels in writing by:
 - helping them to improve their grammar and punctuation
 - supporting them to structure sentences and paragraphs correctly
 - providing a structure for them to develop and extend their writing in a variety of forms
 - working to improve handwriting and presentation.
- Fully embed the recently introduced marking procedures across the whole school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are confident that their children are making good progress. Attainment on entry varies from year to year and is currently broadly average. For the pupils who are in Years 5 and 6 attainment on entry was below average; these pupils are making good progress and are on course to attain broadly average standards in writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in reading in all years is above average. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently on course to exceed the standards expected for their age and many of those in Year 3 are making exceptional progress. Some of these pupils are already almost two terms beyond where they would normally be expected to be. This is based on the highly effective teaching they receive. This picture of attainment and progress is affirmed by the school's assessment records, the work seen in pupils' books and the progress seen during lessons.

For older pupils, those in Years 5 and 6, there is a clear trend of attainment in writing lagging behind that for reading and mathematics. This is mainly because these pupils did not benefit from the good teaching now seen in Years 3 and 4 which is laying a carefully structured foundation for the improvement of pupils' writing skills. While a focus on improving writing skills is increasing progress in Years 5 and 6, it has not been in place long enough to influence significantly the standards that pupils attain. Additionally, some pupils do not take enough care in making the presentation of their work as neat as possible. That said, regular attention to spelling, correct use of grammar and how to structure longer pieces of writing is paying dividends.

The pattern of learning and progress for pupils who have special educational needs who are assessed at school action plus and those who have statements for their special educational needs reflects that of other pupils of their age. These pupils benefit from precise guidance, carefully tailored to their needs by teachers and teaching assistants.

Quality of teaching

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Teaching is good, a view supported by every parent and carer who responded to the inspection questionnaire. During the inspection a significant amount of outstanding teaching was observed. In one excellent lesson the teacher had witnessed the Olympic Torch Relay and recorded an interview with one of the torch bearers. This was used very effectively to inspire pupils' discussions and their writing. This was typical of the ways in which teachers contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons are typified by high expectations, good pace and activities that are matched well to pupils' abilities and needs. Teachers are working effectively to promote pupils' basic skills, especially in reading and mathematics.

The new focus on writing is beginning to have an impact in all years as teachers are giving good attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Improvement is clearly evident in pupils' books and they talk with great enthusiasm about their enjoyment of reading and pride in their writing. Pupils' speaking and listening abilities are also improving because of teachers' astute use of questions to challenge pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive from teachers and from teaching assistants. Pupils are also well informed about how to make their work even better. Even so, teachers in Year 3 have embarked on a new system of marking that is to be rolled out across the whole school. This involves pupils responding to their teachers' comments and there is already great competition among pupils to see if they can write more than their teachers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel safe in school and they think behaviour is good. Parents and carers also think behaviour is good; although among those who responded to the inspection questionnaire a small minority feel lessons are sometimes disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. School records show that this is occasionally the case. However, the consistent approach of staff to managing pupils' behaviour means the number of instances has reduced significantly in recent years, enabling pupils to thrive. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection, with pupils behaving exceptionally well during lessons and in and around the school site. For example, their behaviour during their Olympic Torch procession around the community was exemplary.

Pupils are well informed about the various types of bullying that could occur. For example, they have a good understanding of the dangers posed by misuse of the internet. They are also sensitive to the needs and problems sometimes faced by fellow pupils, particularly those who come from different backgrounds and cultures. The diligent work of staff has improved attendance to the extent that it is now above average.

Leadership and management

Staff at all levels and members of the governing body are united in promoting

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equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the school's community. Senior and middle leaders provide excellent support for less experienced colleagues and those who are new to teaching. The sharing of leadership responsibilities and the way in which school leaders embrace and lead innovative practice enables staff to thrive. The school has opened a training centre for staff from other schools to visit. The headteacher and senior leaders are also involved in outreach work, visiting schools that are experiencing degrees of difficulty. All staff are fully involved in analysing the school's performance and finding solutions to ensure continued improvement. Improved pupil progress, the closing of gaps in attainment, better behaviour and improved attendance all serve to illustrate the school's capacity for continued improvement.

The governing body represents the interests of parents and the community well and provides good support for the school's work. Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work and play a central role in monitoring improvements and evaluating their success. Arrangements for child protection and to ensure that pupils are safe meet current requirements.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. During the inspection the theme for the week was 'courage'. This was used to inspire pupils during an emotional assembly in which staff and pupils spoke of their experiences of those who showed courage. Pupils also spoke and wrote movingly during lessons about examples of courage that were close to them. This served to illustrate the care and respect that pupils have for each other and for people they know or have heard about. One pupil commented that the visit of Para-Olympian shot putter Danny Nobbs earlier in the week had, 'made me see what can be achieved if you are brave enough and try hard enough.'

The curriculum is good. It is suitably broad and balanced and meets pupils' learning needs well. Revisions have resulted in a curriculum that is built around a series of topics that capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. School leaders have ensured that within the range of topics sufficient attention is given to promoting basic skills. This is being undertaken with good effect in reading and mathematics and with increasing impact on writing. Additional activities and special focus days, such as 'science day', create great interest among pupils and parents and carers. There is also a much appreciated breakfast club that enables those who use it to get a good start to their day. The school liaises closely with parents and carers and keeps them well informed about their children's development and progress. Almost all who responded to the inspection questionnaire said they would recommend the school to others. One parent commented, 'This is a great school, always moving forward. I am wowed by their 'can do' approach to everything.'

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Costessey Junior School, Norwich NR5 0RR

You may recall that we visited recently to inspect your school. I must start by thanking those of you who gave your time to talk with us and tell us about the school and your work. We agree with you and with your parents and carers that yours is a good school. We are pleased to see that you behave well and work hard during lessons. We were particularly impressed by your behaviour during the Olympic Torch Relay around the area adjoining the school.

Because you have good teachers, you make good progress. You do particularly well in reading, where your standards are better than found in most other schools. However, your attainment in writing, while improving, is not as good as that for reading and mathematics. We are asking your school leaders and teachers to provide you with even more help to improve your spelling, punctuation and grammar. We hope this will help you to improve your writing and we are confident that you are capable of doing well. You can help by making sure that your work is always as neat and well presented as it can be. Pupils in Year 3 have been experiencing a new marking system, which is helping them to understand how to make their work even better. This is working so well that we agree with your school leaders that it is a good idea to extend it to all the other year groups.

Finally, it was wonderful to listen to your singing in assembly and to hear how you were inspired by the visit of Para-Olympian shot putter, Danny Nobbs. I would like to wish you all the very best in the future and hope you achieve your ambitions; just like Danny.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft
Lead inspector

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