

Colman Infant School

Colman Road, Norwich, NR4 7AW

Inspection dates

1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 their results are significantly above the national averages.
- Outstanding teaching in all classes leads to rapid progress in pupils' learning.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership inspires the confidence of pupils, staff, governors and parents, so they work as a very effective team to improve achievement.
- Pupils love to learn. The school has a constant and productive buzz as everyone strives to achieve their very best.
- Teachers' marking is of a very high quality. It clearly shows pupils what is good about their work and how they can make it better.
- Pupils are given extensive opportunities to write and use their mathematical skills in different subjects such as religious education and science.
- Behaviour is excellent in lessons, on the playground and around the school.
- Leaders have formed very effective partnerships with other schools. These provide useful training opportunities for teachers and governors, and have contributed to raising standards.
- Pupils feel very safe in school; they fully trust all adults to help them should they encounter a problem.
- As a local leader of education, the headteacher provides very effective support to leaders in other schools to help them improve.
- Leaders and governors have a very accurate view of how effective the school is, and use this to write rigorous plans for improvement.
- Pupils who are deaf make good progress. They are included very well in lessons and say that they love to come to this school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its leaders, and say they would recommend it to other parents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. They saw 11 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or senior teacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 2, and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in every class.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors. A representative from the local authority was spoken to on the telephone.
- The 28 responses to the online Parent View survey were considered, together with 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books as well as their work and displays in all classrooms.
- A number of documents were examined, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, school improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding files, data on pupils' current progress, and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.
- Inspectors were accompanied by a British Sign Language interpreter for part of the inspection. Discussions were held with pupils who are deaf, as well as the specialist staff, individual parents and the school's special educational needs coordinator.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Lewis

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which at this school provides additional funding to be used for children known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is specialist provision for pupils who are deaf. The unit is managed and staffed by the local authority 'Virtual School Support Service'. Four pupils are currently supported; the number varies from year to year but is always small.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage pupils to read more for pleasure, by providing a wider range of reading opportunities and developing the library.
- Work with the local authority to make sure pupils who are deaf make outstanding progress in line with other groups, particularly in English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children make an excellent start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start school with skills below those typically found for their age and make outstanding progress in Reception. Many now exceed the Early Learning Goals, especially in reading. This is because teachers make very effective use of assessment information to plan learning activities, and because teaching is outstanding. These combined elements support children in quickly becoming eager and curious learners and incredibly ready to begin Year 1.
- In 2012 and 2013 pupils attained results that were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils typically left the school two terms ahead of national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make exceptional progress in developing their phonic skills, and are quickly able to read fluently and confidently. School information about how well Year 1 pupils are doing in phonics shows that 2014 results are on track to be well above the 2013 national average.
- Progress in writing is strong because pupils are encouraged to write in their literacy and topic work. Pupils enjoy writing and are able to write in a variety of different styles, for example stories, diaries, letters and instructions. Pupils use lively vocabulary to make their writing interesting to read.
- Pupils develop excellent skills in mathematics and make equally outstanding progress as in reading and writing. Pupils are taught how to use their mathematical knowledge and understanding to help them solve mathematical problems and complete investigations. This has helped increase the number of pupils attaining the highest Level 3 by the end of Year 2.
- School information about how well pupils are doing in Year 2 shows results are likely to fall slightly in 2014, but are still on track to be well above the 2013 national averages. This year group began school with much lower skills than usual. Their current results and end-of-year predictions show they are making outstanding progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress and many make outstanding progress. The special educational needs coordinator makes frequent detailed checks about how well these pupils are doing in all aspects of their learning so that any necessary support can be given, or adapted, to suit pupils' individual needs.
- The small numbers of pupils who are deaf make good progress, particularly in mathematics and in their personal and social development. Some individuals make outstanding progress. However, their progress varies considerably in language and literacy. Work in class is sometimes simplified too much for them and not accurately conveyed through the sign support provided. Occasionally, reading materials or tasks do not fully match their language level or needs. This slows the progress of individual pupils, despite the good specialist support they receive at other times and the strong ways in which their mainstream teachers involve them in lessons.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make outstanding progress. In 2013, their attainment in Year 2 was behind that of their classmates but well ahead of similar pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders adapt their spending of the pupil premium each year to best suit individual needs, for example an additional teacher has been employed to enable smaller classes in Year 2 to further narrow the gap in attainment.

- Pupils make fast progress in lessons because they are given work which makes them think hard. All pupils respond positively to the learning challenges, including more-able pupils. This enabled half the pupils in Year 2 in 2013 to reach Level 3 in reading or mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils find their lessons inspirational. They say they love to learn because 'it is so much fun'. They love the challenges their teachers carefully plan for them and are eager to get busy in lessons so they can learn new things and develop new skills. They are very proud of their success in lessons and aspire to do even better. These attitudes are instilled from the day pupils begin school and contribute to their outstanding progress.
- Teachers are astute in assessing how well their pupils are doing. They use this information to plan learning opportunities to help each pupil make fast progress. Such precise use of data helped a small group of Year 1 pupils progress one National Curriculum Level in one and a half terms, representing outstanding progress.
- Teachers are very skilled at asking detailed questions. Pupils have to think very carefully in lessons and are all keen to offer detailed responses to their teacher's questions. All groups, including the more-able pupils, enjoy the high expectations demanded of them.
- When teachers introduce new ideas to pupils their clear explanations and demonstrations are backed up by excellent subject knowledge. Pupils listen attentively, excited and ready to get working.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils are characterised by a mutual desire to improve. Teachers strive to refine their skills so they can provide the best lessons for their pupils, and pupils want to do well for themselves and their teachers.
- Teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils to use their skills in a range of different subjects. Year 1 pupils carefully used skills learnt in design and technology last term to make an Easter card during a free choice card making activity. The pupils decided for themselves that these skills would be effective for making their cards.
- Teachers make sure pupils can practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in topic work, not just in the daily English or mathematics lesson. Pupils are very motivated in their topics and frequently complete high quality, long pieces of writing.
- The teaching of phonics has improved considerably because all teachers and teaching assistants received high quality training two years ago to teach a new scheme. The improved phonics scores and attainment in reading show its impact. Whilst pupils' fluency in reading is better developed at a younger age, some pupils do not have a passion for reading because they are not exposed to a wide range of high quality children's literature in the school library.
- Teachers' marking is exemplary. All work in books is marked to a consistently high standard. Teachers highlight what is good about each piece of work and provide age-appropriate next steps that show how it could be improved. Such helpful marking is appreciated by the pupils, who use the guidance to make their work better.
- Teaching assistants provide excellent support in lessons and to pupils who need additional support. They lead one-to-one support sessions for pupils at risk of falling behind in their

learning. These pupils quickly catch up because of the skilled guidance they receive.

- Skilled support for children who are deaf generally supports their involvement and inclusion in lessons very well. Sometimes not everything that is being discussed is shared with them, particularly those who depend more on British Sign Language. When this happens it holds back their progress, because they have not had as much access to all the information or key language as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils love their school and love coming every day. One wrote in their English book that if stranded on a remote island, one of the two things they would miss most was the school. Pupils arrive happily and on time each morning and their attendance is high.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning from the day they begin in Reception. They are taught about 'learning behaviours', including to keep trying and learn from their mistakes. This is very successful and pupils quickly adopt this attitude for themselves without needing reminders from their teachers.
- Pupils' books and their handwriting are very neat. 'Learning Journals' in Reception are exemplary. Pupils treat their work with great care, reflecting the pride they take in their work. They help keep their classrooms neat and tidy and treat the school's resources and equipment with great care.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In class, around the school and on the playground all groups of pupils conduct themselves well. They are friendly and polite to their classmates, teachers and visitors, and eager to share the exciting experiences provided for them. During the inspection they rushed to tell the inspector about the performance from a local puppet theatre they watched that morning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All policies and procedures are up to date and very clear records are kept to log any rare incidents of misbehaviour, including how the issue has been followed up.
- Pupils are taught many ways to keep safe including when crossing the road and using computers. They also have a basic understanding of first aid and can confidently explain what to do if someone collapses.
- Pupils are confident that there is no bullying in school, just falling out with friends. They say they can usually sort out their problems with friends for themselves, but are confident adults would help them if they needed it.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an excellent leader. He has inspired all members of the school to work as a team, fully focused on helping every pupil to do the very best they can. The ambition that all pupils should enjoy their learning and achieve highly is shared by all members of the school community. Morale is incredibly high.
- The strong sense of teamwork in school is noticed by the pupils themselves. When asked what makes their school special one replied, 'All the teachers help each other and because they help

each other we can do better.’

- The leaders responsible for English and mathematics have successfully led improvements in their subjects. They have provided excellent training for staff and frequently check how well pupils are doing in their subjects by looking at lessons, data and pupils’ work. They use this information to plan future areas for development. This approach has been very successful, as attainment in both subjects has risen considerably in the last two years.
- Leaders and governors have a very accurate view of the school’s strengths and areas for development. They use this information to write detailed plans for improvement. Past plans have been very successful in raising rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics, showing the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.
- The school is a lead school for the ‘Index for Inclusion’ research project conducted by the local authority. This promotes school improvement by including staff, governors, parents and pupils in planning for, and checking, improvements. It has been a very successful project for the school, and its staff are now leading group meetings to develop this approach in other schools.
- The local authority rightly identifies the school as one not needing support, but has made good use of the headteacher’s skills as a local leader of education to support schools that are not making good progress. He has supported three schools and has received positive feedback from the schools and the local authority.
- Teachers are set clear performance targets, linked to improving pupils’ learning. Teachers work together in a ‘paired teaching’ approach to plan activities and teach in different classes to help them meet their targets.
- The leadership of special educational needs is highly skilled and very effective. The coordinator has an excellent understanding of the needs of this group of pupils. She has introduced support schemes to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics. She carefully checks how well pupils are doing and changes the support where needed. She also works part time for the local ‘cluster’ of schools, which helps ensure this group of pupils are well supported in all schools as they move to different stages of their education.
- The agreement between the local authority and the school over the leadership and management of the specialist resource base is currently being reviewed. These pupils and their families are included very well within the school community. However, both the local authority and the school have rightly identified the need to make clearer how achievement and the quality of teaching for pupils who are deaf will be reviewed and improved further and linked to the school’s overall improvement planning.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The school’s excellent curriculum is supported by a wide range of visits and visitors. These provide numerous and extensive opportunities for pupils to appreciate and participate in the arts – for example by dancing at a multicultural festival in central Norwich. An extensive range of after-school and lunchtime clubs include Indian dance, multi-sports and ukulele.
- The school is making good use of the primary sports funding. Pupils are benefiting from gymnastics teaching at the University of East Anglia ‘Sportspark’. They receive specialist teaching and pupils’ skills in physical education (PE) have developed considerably. Teachers are also receiving additional training to develop their skills in teaching PE.

- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They speak highly of the extensive opportunities to be involved in their children’s learning including weekly reading cafes, Index for Inclusion focus groups and learning together sessions. In a recent session parents came in to make Tudor houses with their children as part of the ‘Houses and Homes’ topic. The houses are displayed beautifully throughout the school together with photographs of parents with the children enjoying learning together.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked very effectively to challenge and support the school so that pupils’ achievement has reached an outstanding level. They know how well pupils are doing compared to those in other schools, both locally and nationally. They are provided with excellent information by the headteacher, including about the quality of teaching, and check it through visits. They frequently visit lessons and meet with parents and staff to gather opinions to help inform decisions.
 - Governors are closely involved in all spending decisions, including the allocation of the pupil premium and sports funding, and check the impact it has on improving outcomes for pupils.
 - The pay policy has been reviewed so that staff who perform better, or lead significant improvement in school, can be rewarded financially.
 - For a number of years the governing body has completed an annual self-review and skills audit. This information has been used to identify training needs and helps ensure it operates as effectively as possible.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120938
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	439594

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Stevens
Headteacher	Nick Southgate
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2009
Telephone number	01603 491010
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