

Inspection of a good school: Colman Junior School

South Park Avenue, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7AU

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils feel happy and well cared for at Colman Junior School. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Adults support pupils well in school. If bullying happens, pupils are listened to and helped.

Pupils respect others' differences. They show empathy and understanding towards others. For example, 'young interpreters' describe how they help pupils arriving from different countries who are anxious. Pupils understand why it is important to treat people equally.

Pupils enjoy and appreciate the enrichment activities that are planned for them. For example, pupils were excited to share how activities on their recent residential trip had encouraged them to challenge themselves.

Many pupils enjoy their learning and are actively involved in lessons. This cannot be said for everyone. A number of pupils are not motivated to learn. This interrupts the learning of others. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Most parents felt that their children are safe, happy and do well in school. However, a significant group of them are concerned about behaviour in the school. Some feel the school does not have high expectations for their children.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There have been several changes of leadership since the previous inspection. There has not been a consistent and effective approach to bringing improvements in the school, including in the curriculum. While the new leadership team has quickly identified the immediate priorities, these improvements are in the early stages of development.

Leaders have ensured that pupils access a broad range of subjects. However, this curriculum is not being delivered as well as it should be. In some areas, teachers do not present new information or tasks well. They do not routinely have high enough expectations about what pupils can achieve. The work is too easy for some pupils, while too hard for others. Pupils become disengaged with their learning. A significant number of pupils do not present their work neatly or finish the task set. This goes unchallenged in some classes.

In addition, subject leadership is at an early stage of development in some subjects. Where this is the case, leaders' subject knowledge is not detailed enough to provide support for teachers to teach effectively. Senior leaders have rightly identified that they need to introduce a programme of training for all leaders.

In other areas, the curriculum is delivered more effectively. Teachers explain the lesson content and new concepts clearly. Staff check what pupils know and remember and make links between their previous learning well. For example, in computing, pupils were able to build on their knowledge of coding to produce complex animations.

Leaders have made reading a priority for the school. Staff are well trained in the school's phonics and reading programmes. They provide effective support to pupils who may be falling behind. Pupils enjoy the books they read in class, which provide inspiration for their own writing. For example, after reading an extract from 'The Rainforest', pupils were able to write descriptions of other rainforest animals using similes. Teachers read increasingly challenging books to pupils as they move through the school. Older pupils develop into keen readers.

Leaders have established an inclusive ethos in the school. Many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs accurately identified. Leaders have provided staff with clear guidance about how best to support some pupils. However, this is not routinely the case. Too often, teachers are not provided with precise strategies that help them to adapt their teaching effectively. Leaders are not routinely reviewing how well pupils with SEND are faring. Consequently, some pupils with SEND are not progressing as well as they should. This includes pupils who access the school's own nurture unit for some of their curriculum.

When pupils lose focus and interest in their learning, adults do not always identify and deal with issues quickly and effectively. This leads to some disruption to other pupils' learning. Leaders have adapted behaviour policies, procedures and staff training to address these instances. There are early signs that this work is starting to reduce instances of poor behaviour.

Pupils' personal development is well planned. Pupils have opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and they take these seriously. They learn to appreciate important values and celebrate difference.

While governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, many are new to the role. Governors do not know enough about the curriculum and how well pupils are faring. The

interim headteacher is working closely with the local authority to try to address the issues in provision at the school.

Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that they are being supported to deliver improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders provide regular training for staff and governors. Staff know how to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. They pass on concerns promptly. Leaders support pupils' welfare. They work well with external agencies to provide additional help when needed.

Checks carried out by leaders ensure all staff are suitable to work with pupils. Governors regularly check the school's safeguarding procedures.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils know who to go to if they have a concern. They know that staff take their concerns seriously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are not well trained to deliver some aspects of the curriculum. In these areas, teachers do not use the most effective strategies to ensure that pupils learn the intended knowledge. Pupils do not learn as well as they should and do not take pride in their work. Leaders need to strengthen teachers' pedagogical knowledge to ensure that they deliver the curriculum effectively, so that pupils learn and achieve well.
- Curriculum leadership is less well developed in some subjects. Some curriculum leaders do not know enough about how well pupils are faring in their subjects, nor where the curriculum needs improvement. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders get the training and support they need to implement and monitor the curriculum successfully.
- Leaders have not established rigorous systems to assess, plan, do and review the individual needs of some pupils with SEND. These pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should establish systems to provide staff with strategies and training to meet the needs of pupils. They should also establish monitoring processes to assure themselves that pupils are learning and developing as well as they could.
- Teachers do not always deal with low-level poor behaviour well enough or consistently. This means that learning is sometimes disrupted. Leaders need to ensure that staff are trained to identify and support pupils to improve their behaviour so they can learn effectively along with their classmates.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 120937 |
| Local authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 10206463 |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 237 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Karen Gardner |
| Headteacher | Catherine Wright |
| Website | www.colmanfederation.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 30 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The current interim headteacher joined the school in April 2023. The current interim deputy headteacher joined the school in May 2023.
- The school is federated with Colman Infant School. The interim headteacher and the governors are shared across both schools.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. This is also the case for the number of pupils with an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing.
- For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning

and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils, those responsible for governance and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including the school improvement plan, curriculum plans and school policies.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, the inspector reviewed the school's single central record, met with the designated safeguarding leads and reviewed safeguarding records.
- The inspector reviewed the 61 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 52 free-text responses. The inspector considered the 32 responses received through the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. The inspector spoke to pupils both formally and informally during the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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