



Colman Middle School, Norwich

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120937
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280919
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms. Tricia Pritchard LI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | South Park Avenue |
| School category | Community | | NR4 7AU |
| Age range of pupils | 8 to 12 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01603 444201 |
| Number on roll | 235 | Fax number | 01603 444208 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs. Myra Vogwill |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable | Headteacher | Mrs. Carolyn Sayer |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Colman Middle School, with 235 pupils on roll, aged 8-12 years, is smaller than most middle schools and is situated about a mile from Norwich city centre. It is a popular school and often oversubscribed. The catchment area reflects a mix of private and social housing. There are more boys than girls on roll and more pupils are eligible for free school meals than the national norm. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English and the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are also higher than the national averages. A unit for the deaf is attached to the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is in line with that of other schools but the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is greater.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection findings agree with the school's own judgement that this is a good school. It is very well led and managed. The curriculum is well balanced and pupils have excellent opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These activities generate considerable enthusiasm for learning. Teaching and learning are good and in 2005, pupils' progress in English was significantly above the national average and particularly good for writing. This reflects the emphasis given to improving standards of writing in all classes. The school has a very good knowledge and understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The self-evaluation document is well written and evaluative. The main areas for development identified during the inspection, such as raising standards in mathematics, had already been identified by the school. The extensive assessment and tracking procedures, which are being implemented so successfully, provide a very good basis for individual pupils' target setting and for setting curricular targets within the context of the school's development plan. A positive and caring ethos pervades the school: this is a truly inclusive school. The care and well-being of all pupils assumes a high priority. The working environment is pleasant and the school is well resourced, particularly with teaching assistants. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils respect one another. Teachers provide good role models. Parents take a keen interest in their children's education and are very supportive. Their views are valued. The school is very effective at forward planning. It is implementing successfully its plans for workforce reform and is adopting a well measured approach to preparing to become a junior school in 2007. It offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give priority to raising standards in mathematics and particularly to raising the achievement of higher attaining pupils. - Use the information from tracking pupils' progress and analysing test scores to improve planning and set more specific targets for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Over the last five years, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been broadly in line with those in other schools. A key factor in the slight fluctuation of results from year to year is the variation in the attainment of pupils on entry in Year 4. In 2005, the Key Stage 2 test results in all subjects were higher than those of 2004. Targets for English and science were exceeded. The percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above for mathematics rose from 68% in 2004 to 80% in 2005. This is a significant improvement. The English results were very good. The percentage of higher attaining pupils reaching level 5 was significantly above the national average. However, pupils consistently make better progress in English and science than in mathematics. This trend is reflected in the greater number of higher

attaining pupils who achieve level 5 for English and science but not for mathematics at the end of Year 6. Most pupils make good progress during their time at the school. There is no significant difference between the progress and attainment of boys and girls. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make at least good progress and in some cases, very good progress. In 2004, their performance in all core subjects at the end of Year 6 was significantly above that of pupils in other schools nationally. Pupils with special educational needs consistently achieve higher standards than pupils at other schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like coming to school. They feel safe and are well cared for. They enjoy their lessons and are eager to take part. Attendance is satisfactory. Overall, behaviour is good and pupils respond well to the high expectations of all staff. However, in Year 7, a minority of pupils frequently show poor behaviour. In these instances, the school successfully applies additional strategies in its behaviour policy to counteract any further disruption. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils are polite and friendly and understand how their behaviour and attitudes affect others. The pupils show a good awareness of other cultures and beliefs. Through the school's support for many charities, pupils gain an understanding of their social responsibilities. The school council takes its duties seriously and has organised an 'anti-bullying day' to promote greater understanding of the consequences of any form of discrimination. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and pupils understand the need to take regular exercise to stay fit. There are very good links with the local secondary schools and pupils feel well prepared for the next steps in their education. Teachers from one local secondary school provide specialist science and information and communication technology tuition for older pupils. This initiative is a very positive factor in enabling pupils to prepare for their future economic well-being. Older pupils make a positive contribution to the community. For example, they visit the local special school where they play happily together, assisting children at lunchtimes and breaktimes. They possess a good awareness and understanding of the needs of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching in most lessons is good. The staff are highly experienced. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and most lessons are well planned. Pupils are set according to ability for mathematics across the school and for English in Year 6 and part of Year 7. These arrangements are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Guided reading is very well taught. Short daily lessons are well structured and texts are chosen carefully. Consequently, pupils enjoy reading and make good use of the time. Mathematics teaching presents a more mixed picture but is always at least satisfactory. Pupils in the deaf unit are taught very well. Teaching

assistants are deployed very effectively to support lower attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs. They show initiative and are highly competent at fulfilling their roles. A key strength is the systematic approach to tracking individual pupils' progress and attainment and to analysing the test results of different cohorts of pupils. However, teachers do not make full use of the data to set well focused targets for individuals or groups of pupils in mathematics. The school has recognised that this is an area for development. Effective systems are used to diagnose pupils' additional learning needs. The gifted and talented are identified and provided with very good opportunities to engage in a wealth of extra-curricular activities to support their learning. For example, in 2005, a group of Year 7 pupils participated in science enrichment activities at the local high school and won the Science Olympiad.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Good use is made of educational visits to make topics come alive. For example, pupils attend living history days on topics such as the Romans and Tudors. Children and parents appreciate these enormously. The organisation of the curriculum is adapted well to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, those with disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils in the deaf unit are very well provided for. Good arrangements are made to enable them to have access to the full National Curriculum both within the unit and in mainstream classes. Provision for health, sex and drugs education is built into the curriculum well. Pupils enjoy an excellent range of activities outside lessons which include art and crafts, sports, recorders and computers. There is a high take up for all activities and staff give very freely of their time to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils regularly take part in national competitions, where they have been very successful. This adds significantly to the pupils' experiences and helps them to gain confidence in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good. The school gives a very warm welcome to all pupils. Pastoral support is especially strong. Teachers and support staff are very sensitive to the needs of all individuals and provide well for their specific needs. Good access facilities are provided for those who use wheelchairs. Close attention is given to pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils are confident about taking any problems to their teachers and know that any incidents, such as bullying or racism, will be dealt with firmly. Child protection procedures are in place and clearly understood by all staff. Teaching assistants play a very important role in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and those with disabilities enabling them to make good progress. The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires said that they welcomed the good care, guidance and support that their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the senior management team and governors. Together, they provide a clear sense of direction and are highly successful at promoting a strong sense of team work both within the school and with external partners. Colman Middle School offers exemplary practice as an inclusive school. Pupils in the deaf unit are very well integrated. The school is popular in the local community and has no difficulty recruiting staff. Staffing levels are good. Financial resources are exceptionally well deployed to support teaching and learning. For example, the recent appointment of additional teaching assistants. Self-evaluation and annual reviews of provision are well established and rigorous. Curriculum co-ordinators have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities as leading practitioners. Monitoring the quality of teaching is well embedded in the school's practice. Open and honest feedback is given to teachers. The overarching curricular aims in the school's development plan are well matched to the outcomes of self-evaluation. However, the success criteria, especially for mathematics, are not sufficiently focused upon raising standards. The school is continually improving its provision. It is led and managed very effectively and efficiently, and is well placed to ensure a smooth transition from a middle school to a junior school in 2007.

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Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming Mrs Yates and myself to your school this week. We enjoyed meeting you all and hearing about your school. We think that Colman Middle School is a good school. We particularly want to say well done to you for achieving such good standards in English. You obviously enjoy your daily reading sessions. Your teachers have worked hard to encourage you to write fluently so that you achieve good results for your writing as well as for your reading. We have asked your teachers to encourage you in future to achieve the same high scores for mathematics. You are very well cared for by all staff. We saw you playing happily together and being polite to one another both in school and in the playground. A few pupils in Year 7, however, let themselves down with their behaviour so we want these pupils to concentrate on improving their behaviour. You are fortunate in having so many opportunities to join clubs after school and it is good that so many of you want to participate. Your headteacher is a very good leader. She knows each one of you very well. Together with the staff, she is always thinking of ways to provide you with even more opportunities for you to succeed with your learning. We hope your charity sale went well and that you raised a lot of money. I am sure you had fun finding out what was in your jam jars. All these activities are so well planned at your school and we know that you derive pleasure from participating. Well done! I hope that your end-of-term festivities go well.