



Colman First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120938
LEA NORFOLK LEA
Inspection number 280920
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 7 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Colman Road
School category	Community		NR4 7AW
Age range of pupils	4 to 8		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603491010
Number on roll	183	Fax number	01603491011
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Stuart Beard
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. Nicholas Southgate

Age group 4 to 8	Inspection dates 6 June 2006 - 7 June 2006	Inspection number 280920
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a residential area of Norwich. While most pupils are from White British backgrounds, about one in five comes from minority ethnic families where English is not the main language spoken. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties or disabilities. This includes those in a specialist unit for children with hearing difficulties. When pupils are admitted to the Reception class, the school's assessments show their attainment covers a very wide range but, overall, is below that typically found in children of this age. This is mainly because of the number who have limited skills in English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's opinion that its effectiveness is good. Pupils achieve well. They are catered for well in the Foundation Stage, reaching at least the standards expected by the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 to 3, they continue to make good progress because they are taught well and the curriculum is good. The school's performance at the end of Key Stage 1 in recent years has been above average, with particular strengths in the standards of reading and writing. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their overall personal development are good. While most of the teaching in the school is good, the quality of the lessons seen during the inspection varied considerably. This variability occasionally leads to pupils losing interest in their lessons, or to the valuable skills of the teaching assistants not being used efficiently. The next stage for the school's improvement is to eradicate any weaker teaching. The school also needs to ensure that pupils' work is marked and assessed consistently well in all classes, thus helping to raise standards further. The pastoral care of pupils is good and adds to their enjoyment of school. There is outstanding provision for children who are deaf or have hearing difficulties. They receive a high standard of care and very close attention to their particular needs. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is clear about the school's strengths and how it can become even better. Parents' and pupils' views are very positive. In his two years in the school, the headteacher has ensured that the subject leaders and governors take an active role in how the school develops. They now need more rigorous ways to check that their initiatives lead to better provision for the pupils and contribute to higher standards. Since its last inspection in 1999, the school has continued to provide an effective education for pupils and shows a good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teaching is high quality, maintains pupils' interest and uses support staff efficiently. - Ensure assessment and marking support teachers' planning and inform pupils how well they are doing. - Measure the success of initiatives for improvement by their impact on standards and the quality of education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a lower than average starting point on admission to the school, pupils' achievement is good overall, including by those who have learning difficulties. The pupils in the unit who are deaf do very well despite their difficulties. The school's assessments show that its pupils from ethnic minorities, including those whose first language is not English, make progress that is at least as good as other groups. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage, and this continues in Years 1 to 3. The school's assessments of pupils in Year 2 have been mostly above average over the past five years, although stronger recently in reading and writing than in mathematics. The results for the current Year 2 show a similar picture in reading and writing again this

year. They indicate improving results in mathematics, with more pupils reaching the higher levels this year than last. The targets that the school sets for this age group are satisfactory, but the fact that they are likely to be exceeded by some way this year would suggest they are not as challenging as they could be. Pupils in Year 3 generally make good progress before they transfer to their middle school. The school recognised that it needed to raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT). Improved resources and teaching mean that pupils are now making good progress and reaching expected standards in this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is a little below the national average, but the pupils settle quickly each day and usually work with interest. Pupils' behaviour is good. They show pride in the school and enjoy their work and achievements. Most show concern when there is occasional misbehaviour, and know how to stay safe and where to turn for help from the staff. They understand well about the importance of a healthy diet and of physical activity and fitness. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are aware of the widely different backgrounds of their classmates and show sensitivity and understanding of specific interests and needs, including those of pupils who are deaf. They have good social skills and cooperate well with each other and with their teachers, for example in contributions to classroom routines and the work of a school council. Some of the older pupils provide good role models in their contributions to activities in school and in the wider community such as music events or charity fund-raising. They have an effective foundation for their future academic and social well-being and look forward to the range of opportunities in their next school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers choose resources that engage the pupils well and plan lessons that have clear purposes and are suitably varied. Lessons often include stimulating questioning, effective sharing of knowledge, activities that are matched to the different needs of groups, and helpful closing summaries. Teaching assistants are generally used well to support individual pupils and also to manage resources, but in some lessons their time is not used efficiently. For example, they do not contribute enough to assessment procedures. In most lessons there is good use of assessment and marking, including clear recognition of pupils' achievements and the identification of specific practical targets to guide the next steps in learning. The quality of lessons is, nevertheless, varied and occasionally pays too little attention to capturing and maintaining pupils' interest and to meeting the full range of pupils' different needs. Children's learning is assessed well in the

Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 3, the teachers gauge the progress of all pupils in key skills by regular testing and noting achievements during lessons. The main assessments of pupils tend to happen at the end of the school year. While the use of this information is satisfactory, the school does not collect and use such data frequently enough to help to guide planning and target-setting for individuals and groups more precisely throughout the year.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum. Pupils' needs are met well by a programme of topics that make work relevant and sustain their involvement. The school has worked hard this year to make its curriculum more interesting and purposeful to pupils. Recently planned topics provide good stimulation and enable the teachers to meet all statutory requirements. There is a strong emphasis on basic skills and good overall provision for literacy, numeracy and for ICT. Long-term and medium-term planning are sound and promote suitable steps in learning from year to year. A good programme of personal, social and health education builds pupils' understanding of a wide range of topics including health, safety and relationships. The school makes good use of visits to enrich the curriculum and extend pupils' experience, for example, to museums and places of worship. Valuable extra experiences are offered by staff and visitors who support a range of clubs and after school activities. Activities such as music, Indian dancing and fund raising for charities provide ways in which many of the pupils can contribute to the local area and learn about different cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The staff provide good care, guidance and support for the pupils through their day-to-day care and strong commitment to including pupils from all backgrounds in all that happens in school. Occasional misbehaviour is dealt with effectively and is used productively to shape pupils' understanding, for example about over-boisterous play or racism. Appropriate attention is paid to safeguarding pupils through procedures such as risk assessments and child protection arrangements. Any additional learning needs are identified systematically the school's good provision in this area includes effective links with the parents of these pupils and with relevant outside agencies. In some classes, good advice and feedback help the pupils to learn rapidly, especially about their writing. However, teachers' responses to the pupils' work vary considerably, for example, in the quality of marking. There are examples of extremely good practice. However, some pupils receive too little guidance on how to improve their work, and relatively little advice is given to stimulate better achievement in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since its last inspection the school has maintained the many good aspects of provision that were identified then and has kept pace with the national trends in pupils' standards. It continues to provide a good standard of teaching and care and to welcome pupils from all backgrounds and of all capabilities. It is planning well for the challenges of falling rolls in the area and the forthcoming reorganisation of all local schools. Since his arrival, the headteacher has gradually refined the arrangements for analysing pupils' performance and evaluating the school's overall effectiveness. This has led to the teachers being more involved and to satisfactory systems for checking standards and quality. These systems increasingly reflect the views of governors, staff, parents and pupils. The subject leaders now need to check the success of their initiatives for improvement more rigorously. For example, the criteria they set for judging success in the school development plan are too rarely focused on how pupils' achievement will improve as a result of their actions. The governors support the school well and are active in its strategic planning. Their financial planning is managing the impact of changing pupil numbers well. They too need to ensure that their monitoring is more closely linked to current initiatives so that they have a full picture of the school's effectiveness. There is a clear determination in the school to continue to do the best and with its current staff team, there is a good capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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

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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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	2	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	2	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	2	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 for welcoming us to your school and helping us to find out about it. We enjoyed meeting you and were impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour. We agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school. Here are some of the best things we saw at your school: - Everyone gets on really well together and you told us how much you like school. - You do well with your work and are keen to learn more. - Your teachers give you interesting lessons and extra activities that help you learn well. - The adults care for you and make sure you feel safe in school. - Mr Southgate and your teachers work hard to make sure your school keeps getting better. We have talked to Mr Southgate and your teachers about some things that could be even better. We want your teachers to make sure that all your lessons are as good as possible so that you all keep enjoying them and learning more. We would also like your teachers to make sure you all know how well you are doing and what you need to learn next. This might be in the way they mark your work and set your targets. Many of you already do plenty of this in your writing lessons and we think this is helping you to get better. It could help you to get even better at mathematics. Your teachers are finding new ways to make your work interesting. You showed us this in your work about The Great Fire of London. We would like your teachers to check that this sort of work is helping your to learn all the things you need for the future. Keep enjoying all that Colman First School has to offer you.