



Colsterworth Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120545
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291776
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Back Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Colsterworth, Grantham
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lincolnshire NG33 5NJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 860569
Number on roll (school)	114	Fax number	01476 860569
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Rod Rose
		Headteacher	Mr Mark Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	22–23 November 2006	291776

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small rural school takes pupils from the village of Colsterworth and surrounding villages. It is situated close to the Lincolnshire market town of Grantham. Pupils are mostly from white British backgrounds with none in the early stages of learning English. There are no pupils claiming free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and with statements of special educational need is similar to that in most schools. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is generally around that expected. The number of pupils on the school roll has fallen in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Colsterworth is a satisfactory school that is rapidly improving. The recently appointed dynamic headteacher has a clear vision. He gives a good lead to the school and is the driving force behind recent improvements. Newly introduced assessment and tracking strategies, combined with improvements in teaching and better planning to meet the wide range of needs in each class are helping to increase pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics. Staff and governors are a caring, dedicated team with a shared commitment to help the headteacher move the school forward.

A strong feature of the school's work is the personal development and well-being of pupils, which is good. Pupils enjoy school and want to be there. As one parent said, 'Colsterworth is a wonderful school. My children are very happy here.' Attendance is good, as is behaviour, and the very few arguments between pupils are sorted out quickly. Parents are pleased with their children's positive attitudes to learning which are brought about by a number of significant factors. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. The school provides a satisfactorily broad curriculum with an interesting array of additional activities. This good range of additional activities, coupled with the friendly supportive atmosphere, helps pupils grow in confidence, enjoy learning and behave well. Pastoral care for pupils is good so that pupils feel safe and secure at school, saying that 'you never have to worry because there is always someone who will help you'. Although recent improvements have been made, guidance given to support pupils' academic progress is less effective. The school is rightly planning to improve the way that staff mark pupils' work and how they use individual targets to help pupils understand their next steps in learning.

From the time they start in Reception, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average. Although standards are above average in Year 6, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. The main reason that progress is satisfactory rather than good is because some teachers do not always ensure that activities are matched carefully enough to the pupils' different abilities, and there is not always a high level of challenge in some lessons. This is especially important because, in mixed-age classes, there is a very wide spread of ability and skills. This lack of close matching of work to individual needs prevents standards from being even higher. Subject leaders and governors recognise the need to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. They know that this area requires improvement to ensure that the headteacher is fully supported in taking the school forward and also so that the improvements already made are built on further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently match activities to the pupils' different abilities and increase the levels of challenge to all pupils.
- Ensure marking and target setting provide pupils with more individual guidance about their next steps in learning.

- Develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of governors and subject leaders to support school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make a good start and enter Year 1 with above expected levels in all areas. Good progress continues, so that by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in relation to their capabilities and reach above-average standards in Year 6. The achievements of pupils with learning difficulties are similar to those of all pupils. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls, although there is some variation in some year groups. The school has achieved its targets in recent years. Since the last inspection, standards throughout the school steadily fell until good support by the local authority arrested the decline. The new headteacher has injected even greater urgency to improve pupils' progress. For example, following a thorough analysis, staff identified that pupils across the school, were not making enough progress in mathematics. As a result of focused teaching and targeted support, pupils are starting to make better progress. Gaps in learning are being plugged, although the school recognises that there is still more to be done.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and confident. Pupils happily work and play together, behave well in and around the school and most listen well in class. By Year 6, pupils have developed into well-rounded individuals who have acquired appropriate skills to help them in later life. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Good relationships throughout the school create a happy and supportive school community in which pupils feel valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They develop a strong sense of responsibility and community. For example, pupils join in a wide range of church and village events and take their responsibility as guardians of Sir Isaac Newton's birthplace very seriously. They are very sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. They lead active lives and know the importance of healthy eating. Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils take on a wide range of duties around the school, and older pupils act as buddies of the youngest. The school council plays a significant role in discussing issues of concern. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Their understanding of their own culture is good. They have a sound understanding of other faiths and cultures which is strengthened by visits and visitors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, who try hard to do well as a result. Although most teachers' expectations are high, some do not expect enough of pupils. This is because lesson plans do not always make it clear what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn. Because the activities are not always sharply matched to pupils' differing needs, there are missed opportunities to spur on learning. In addition, some teachers accept untidy handwriting and presentation from pupils. Recent monitoring by the headteacher, improved assessment and a better understanding about how pupils learn is leading staff to increasingly plan lessons that make learning more interesting and enjoyable. Such activities include good opportunities for investigative learning. For example, Year 2, pupils delight in using the interactive whiteboard to 'roll a dice' to increase their knowledge of tens and units and 'doubles', while pupils in Years 6 proudly work out formulae to solve mathematical problems. Teachers carefully model new skills and teaching assistants support learning well, particularly when leading small groups or supporting individual pupils who find concentrating on learning more difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. A good emphasis is placed on improving skills in English, mathematics and science. This helps pupils to build a good foundation for their next school, and eventually for the world of work. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils are making good progress in using ICT skills for learning in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs and by visitors to the school as well as by a series of special days. For example, pupils thought the recent Victorian day 'was great fun and a really good way to learn about the past'. These events are well supported and help to make learning exciting. Additional high quality musical opportunities help to increase pupil's confidence and self-esteem. The school recognises that more can be done to make learning even more thought-provoking and interesting by linking work between subjects. The Reception outdoor play environment provides limited educational opportunities for the youngest pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Adults provide pupils with good pastoral care and ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living and are regularly reminded about the need to take care, for instance, when talking to strangers. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that it is doing all it can to support those with learning difficulties.

The academic guidance provided for pupils is less secure. Pupils are given helpful guidance in lessons and this helps them to make, at a minimum, sound progress. However, some marking, although done regularly, often praises without giving pupils enough guidance on the next steps to improve their work. Pupils have some targets for improving their work but these are not fully understood by the pupils who are not sure about 'how they could get better'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has hit the ground running and quickly established a good awareness of what needs to be tackled in order to improve pupils' rate of learning. His energetic and enthusiastic leadership has pointed the school in the right direction and has already led to many improvements. Teachers now have the necessary assessment tools to ensure that curriculum planning progressively develops pupils' subject skills. Improved monitoring of pupils' learning means that support can be targeted where it is most needed and pupils are making better progress.

Staff say that the new headteacher is 'a real driving force'. They are keen to bring about change and to do their best for the pupils. They are already benefiting from well-tailored professional support and development to help them identify, share and develop good practice in teaching and learning. Subject managers and governors are very supportive, but know there is more to do in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision. They need to ensure that everyone has the necessary skills to help accelerate the rate of learning and support the headteacher in driving forward school improvement.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 November 2006

Dear Children

Colsterworth Church of England Primary School, Back Lane, Colsterworth, NG33 5NJ

Thank you for welcoming me so well to your school. I enjoyed talking to you, watching you learn and looking at your work. I thought you would like to hear what I liked about your school and how it could get even better.

What I liked about your school

- You are friendly and confident, and happy to talk about what you were doing.
- You behave well in lessons and enjoy what you do, especially when you are working together or have practical activities to do.
- You have some good ideas about how the school can improve.
- Your headteacher and other grown-ups working in the school look after you and make sure that everyone behaves well and is happy. This makes sure that you can get on in lessons.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard at their teaching and try to get it right for each one of you.
- Your parents really like the school and feel you learn well.

What I have asked your school to do to make it even better

- Your teachers should make sure the work they set each of you is hard enough to make you think and stretches you further.
- Your teachers need to tell each of you clearly what you need to do to get better when they mark your work or set you targets.
- Your teachers should check what is happening more in other classes and share all the good things they find so that they can learn from each other and get even better.
- Your governors need to find out more about the school by looking much more closely at how you are getting on, so they can help the school to be even more successful than it is now.

I feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn in the future. You have some challenging targets for 2007. Continue to work hard and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston HMI