



Collingtree Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122107
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292320
Inspection date 11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lodge Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Collingtree
Age range of pupils	4–11		Northampton NN4 0NQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 761469
Number on roll (school)	141	Fax number	01604 700825
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Neale Goff
		Headteacher	Peter Spong
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	11 January 2007	292320

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Collingtree is a small village school with relatively low levels of deprivation amongst pupils. There are broadly average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties. A small minority of pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British and few of these do not speak English fluently. Mobility is exceptionally high, with almost half of pupils entering or leaving the school during their primary years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Collingtree is a delightful school which offers a good and improving education to pupils. Pupils' personal development and well-being and the academic progress they make are good in all age groups, including Reception. This is because teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for them are all of good quality. The school is clearly enjoyed by pupils and appreciated very much by parents. As one parent typically reported, 'Not only are they doing well academically, but they are very happy at school.' Exceptionally good behaviour by pupils is a result of positive, supportive relationships with staff and purposeful, interesting teaching. Standards in the school are above average and pupils' achievements are good. The school is well led and managed, which has resulted in substantial improvement since the last inspection in the progress pupils make, in the quality of teaching and in the way the school is organised and governed. A relatively new system for assessing and monitoring how well pupils are progressing and for setting them challenging targets has contributed well to many of these improvements. Nevertheless, not all teachers use this system consistently when planning lessons and in some lessons, pupils' progress is slowed as a result. Monitoring of its use is not rigorous enough.

Good self-evaluation has resulted in senior leaders having an accurate picture of what needs to be improved, and plans for developing the school are evidently effective. Although teaching is generally good, many lessons still lack sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. This has led to weaker problem-solving and enquiry-based skills in mathematics, science and geography. The school has focused recently on improving pupils' writing because there are pockets of underachievement in some groups, but opportunities are missed to encourage good writing skills in all subjects. The good curriculum offers a rich variety of opportunities for pupils, such as sporting events, musical instrument tuition and plenty of visits. There are successful programmes to help pupils be aware of how to keep safe, and plenty of opportunity to take part in healthy exercise. Pupils are encouraged successfully to care for each other and they willingly take on a host of responsibilities. Through well-developed social and basic skills, good teamwork and enterprise activities, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Secure the improvements brought about by the new assessment and target-setting system, through more rigorous monitoring of its use in lessons.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by increasing planned opportunities for writing in all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that lesson planning places a greater focus on independent and enquiry-based learning, especially in mathematics, science and geography.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are slightly above average when pupils enter the school, and are above average when they leave in Year 6, demonstrating good overall achievement in 2006 for the first time in several years. This is as a result of well-directed strategies put into place by senior leaders and embraced by teachers. Progress in the Reception class is equally good. Details of pupils' progress and achievement vary considerably from year to year but an upward trend with improving results is evident from school records and observations made during the inspection. Pupils do particularly well in reading. Progress in writing remains too slow in some groups throughout the school, although it is improving. Progress in mathematics for pupils aged five to seven is also relatively slow, but is much improved on previous years. For the first time in 2006, the more able pupils in Year 6 made good progress in mathematics. In English, mathematics and science, a majority of pupils now achieve their quite challenging targets regardless of when they joined the school. Pupils with learning difficulties make the most gains in their learning because of the effective support they receive. Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects, particularly information communication technology (ICT), physical education, history and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has a strong spiritual ethos and pupils are considerate and show concern for others. Pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures is less well developed, although satisfactory overall. Pupils behave exceptionally well and work hard in lessons. Several pupils report how much fun school is and how good humoured the teachers are, which is reflected in their open and lively attitudes. Despite this, attendance is not above average, because several parents persist in taking their children on holiday during term time. Pupils take part in many physical and sporting activities, which helps them to stay healthy, but they are not fully aware of how to eat healthily. This is because the programme to encourage healthy eating is too limited. Pupils are very aware of how to act safely and incidents of bullying or exclusions are rare. Pupils contribute in many ways to the running of the school, including taking part in the school council, acting as 'buddies' or being on 'bully watch.' Pupils are well-rounded individuals by the time they leave the school and are suitably prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is good teaching and learning throughout the school, including in Reception. Most lessons are well planned and interesting and provide sufficient challenge for the

majority of pupils. Supportive, good-natured relationships and effective classroom management means that pupils behave very well in all lessons. These positive attitudes contribute significantly to the good progress being made. Teachers have good overall subject knowledge and are carefully supported by the subject leaders. Teaching assistants are skilled and support those with learning difficulties particularly well. There are two weaknesses within teaching which prevent even better progress being made. Firstly, not all teachers use the assessment and target-setting system consistently to ensure that all pupils are making expected progress. In addition, too many lessons lack opportunities for pupils to learn independently. This has resulted in the relatively weaker investigative and problem-solving skills of pupils in mathematics, science and geography.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is interesting to pupils and meets their needs. Pupils' ICT skills are developed well in all subjects, but there is too little planning across subjects for developing other basic skills, particularly writing. The school is a lively place to be, with music tuition, reading and computer research among the many activities taking place around the school. One parent, in describing it as 'a wonderful learning environment,' reflects the views of others. Strong links with other groups and schools secure a host of activities which makes school life a rich experience to support pupils' developing skills. These include safety awareness, national sponsored events, an orchestra and many team sports. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to experience the world of enterprise and to develop good social and teamwork skills in preparation for their futures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes all appropriate steps to keep pupils safe. There are also good and effective systems for supporting pupils' personal development and well-being, particularly for those who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties. Pupils really grow in confidence and want to do well as a result. Parents are very pleased with the way pupils are settled into the school, into their new classes each year and into the next school, which they feel helps them to 'thrive' and do well. The school has recently developed a good system for setting quite challenging targets for individual pupils in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' progress towards these is monitored each half term so that support and intervention can be put into place for those who need it. This has resulted in improved achievement for pupils in these subjects and parents say that what pupils have to do to improve is 'crystal clear'. The use of these targets to support learning day to day is not yet well embedded, which weakens their impact for a few pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management, well supported by governors, have set a clear direction over the last three years, leading to the recent good achievement. This has been a result of improved staffing and leadership and therefore better teaching and learning. This is why pupils' progress has improved and good achievement for pupils with high ability is now established. Good self-evaluation and careful monitoring of pupils' performance have ensured that areas for improvement are appropriate and effective. The monitoring of teaching, however, is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that initiatives, such as assessment and target setting, are sufficiently well embedded to secure expected progress for all pupils. Nevertheless, the well-focused improvements that have taken place demonstrate a good capacity to continue improving.

The school building has some serious shortcomings, being short of space and split between two sites, although these are managed very well. The school provides good value for money.

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

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	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and joining you for some of your lessons.

We found your school to be successful, well run and caring. It is a good school, just like you and your parents told us it was. It helps you to make good progress. The success you have with reading is very good. You make good progress in your personal skills, behaving extremely well and being responsible in caring for others. Your teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at helping you to do your best and they teach you well. We do think that you need more encouragement to learn how to investigate things and solve problems on your own. The way you become more mature and work hard is very good and you clearly enjoy school.

We were pleased to see how much exercise you take. You work and socialise very well together and we think that this, alongside your good skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and teamwork, will stand you in good stead for the future. Your teachers see to it that you have lots of interesting activities to help you improve many of your skills and make your work enjoyable. We would like them to give you more opportunities to write in lots of different subjects. The school is very successful in keeping you safe and looking after you. Senior staff lead the school well but we have suggested that they look more carefully to check whether all your lessons are planned well enough to help each one of you to reach your targets. You clearly play a good part in the success of the school.

We wish you all the very best in the future.