

# Cold Norton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114904
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311750
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Pangbourne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr G Simmons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs P Dowsing
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	St Stephen's Road Cold Norton Chelmsford Essex CM3 6JE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01621827086
<b>Fax number</b>	01621829561

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school in a rural setting. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. None speaks English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for a free school meal is very low. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children start school, their attainment varies each year but it is often a little below expectations for their age, particularly in language and mathematical skills.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are positive about it. One wrote, 'I cannot praise the school and the teachers highly enough.' The pupils agree, saying 'It's a really friendly school and the teachers help you to learn.'

This is a school where every pupil is important. Everything that the school does is closely monitored and initiatives are introduced to eliminate any areas of weakness. For example, the school identified that last year not many pupils in Year 2 reached the higher than expected level 3. Extra help was put in place and this year more pupils are expected to reach level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations for each pupil and thoroughly track their progress to ensure that extra programmes are provided for any who are falling behind or forging ahead. Consequently, pupils who find it hard to learn make excellent progress because they receive such very effective individual support. In 2007, standards were broadly average in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, they were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Pupils make excellent progress in mathematics because of the help they get, often individually. In line with the national picture, pupils do a little better in reading than they do in writing. Standards in both subjects are above average and the gap is narrowing year on year. The school is currently looking at ways to improve this further by assessing pupils more often, particularly in writing, instead of using a range of tests to assess their progress at key points during the year. This year, standards are likely to be similar to 2007, although more pupils are on course to reach higher than the expected levels in Year 2. Overall, pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well.

There are several reasons why pupils do well. Good leadership and management contribute positively to the school's success. The headteacher has initiated many new developments since her appointment in 2006, which are helping to take the school forward. Talented teaching assistants, for example, play an important role. Some lead special sessions to help pupils who are falling behind, while others teach pupils to speak French. The exciting curriculum, enriched by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, as well as visits and visitors, interests the pupils and encourages them to learn. The quality of teaching is good and contributes positively to progress.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They receive excellent care, support and guidance so they grow in confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, reflecting the caring, family ethos of the school. As a result, behaviour is excellent and pupils are very polite and friendly. They talk enthusiastically about caring for younger ones, acting as play leaders and buddies. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. The exceptional emphasis given to healthy lifestyles and on keeping safe means that pupils are particularly knowledgeable about keeping fit. The way in which they contribute to the community, both in and out of school, is excellent.

Leadership and management are good. Subject leaders fulfil their roles effectively. The governors watch over the school well. They are committed and are keen for the school to do its best. Self-evaluation is accurate, if a little modest at times. The good progress since the previous inspection indicates that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Parents are positive about the start their children receive. One wrote, 'The teacher is very approachable and I am pleased with my child's progress.' Children make good progress and most are on course to meet the early learning goals, set for them nationally, by the beginning of Year 1. They achieve well because the quality of teaching is good and the staff make learning fun. For example, the children enjoyed placing large coloured discs on the ground to make repeating patterns. The children enjoy coming to school and willingly leave their parents and carers, eager to see what they will learn each day. The leader of the Foundation Stage is new to her role and to the age range but she ensures that activities meet the children's needs and that the curriculum is well planned. The school is currently strengthening the leadership of the Foundation Stage by providing opportunities for her to extend her understanding of the needs of such young children and to develop and embed the recent guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Narrow the gap between standards in reading and writing by frequent assessment of pupils' daily writing to give a clearer and up to date view of what pupils have learnt and what they need to learn next.
- Ensure that the recent guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is firmly embedded to further improve provision for these children.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Year groups are often small and standards can vary each year, but pupils make good progress from their starting points. In 2007, the proportion of Year 2 pupils reaching the higher than expected level 3 in assessments was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, an above average proportion reached the higher than expected level 5, particularly in mathematics, where they make excellent progress. This positive outcome develops from the support given to help pupils to improve. Pupils who find it hard to learn make excellent progress because they receive very effective support and their progress is very closely monitored.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and treat one another with kindness and respect. They are very polite and well mannered, escorting visitors to the hall at lunchtime and speaking confidently to adults. They become tolerant and caring individuals because of their excellent understanding of the range of cultures in society. They develop an outstanding sense of responsibility to their school and the local community, raising funds for charities and taking their roles as school councillors very seriously. Pupils understand the importance of recycling. They consider philosophical questions by asking and contributing to 'Question of the Week'. Pupils enjoy growing and eating their own vegetables and during lunch with the school council, several examined the nutritional labels on the cereal bars before making a choice. Pupils are building a good foundation for later life and the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations and use challenging questions to motivate the pupils and to encourage them to think and develop their own ideas. Talented teaching assistants are used very effectively to ensure that all pupils, including those who find it hard to learn, get plenty of support in lessons. Pace is brisk and very good relationships mean that pupils are not afraid to ask questions. Lessons are thoroughly planned with different activities organised to meet the needs of all pupils. Occasionally, pupils take too long to settle when they move from a whole class to a group activity because resources are not always readily available. Assessment procedures are good and teachers have a clear view of the next steps in learning. The school plans to improve the assessment of writing still further by introducing more frequent on-going assessments.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs. An unusual range of extra-curricular activities, such as cheer leading, story telling and board games, enriches it. A wide range of visits and visitors contribute positively to pupils' personal development. The school has worked hard to implement new national guidance, sensibly adapting it to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 learn to speak French and those in Year 6 learn Spanish. Classes are named after countries and this gives pupils an understanding of other cultures and languages. Music has a high profile and pupils sing well. Pupils are confident in their use of information and communication technology. Although the needs of gifted and talented pupils are generally met well, the school has identified this as an area for further development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

This is an extremely caring and friendly school. All staff work very closely to ensure that pupils are very well cared for and kept safe. All procedures for safeguarding pupils and for child protection are thorough and in place. Good links with external agencies contribute very positively to the progress made by those who find it hard to learn. Progress is monitored very closely and extra support is quickly provided for those who need it. Often, this support is tailored exactly to the individual needs of the pupils and this individual tuition helps pupils succeed. Pupils have targets to help them improve and they talk confidently about what they need to do.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are committed to improvement. Everything they do is carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure its success. Many parents and staff rightly praise the initiatives that the headteacher has introduced since her appointment. She gives much of her time to support pupils personally and this contributes to rising standards. Much has been done to improve the accommodation and this now provides an environment that is conducive to learning. Subject leaders fulfil their roles

effectively but opportunities for them to monitor standards and teaching in the classroom has lapsed recently as they have been working to implement new national guidance. The school plans to re-establish this shortly. The governors gain a good view of the school through their termly 'monitoring afternoons'. They know that their decision to fund small classes is having a positive impact on standards. However, some of them do not question decisions as much as they should.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

18 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Cold Norton Primary School, Cold Norton, CM3 6JE

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. I would like to tell you what I found out.

You told me that you enjoyed coming to school because it was a friendly place and the grown-ups look after you very well. I agree with you. You make good progress as you move through the school and you do particularly well in mathematics. Those of you who find it hard to learn also do especially well because you get lots of help. If you are finding something difficult, then the teachers and teaching assistants help you. They all know you so well that they can give you help that is exactly right for you. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour and very good manners. I enjoyed my lunch with the school council. Thank you for inviting me and for looking after me so well. I enjoyed seeing all the vegetables that you are growing. You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy. You have many interesting things to do in lessons and in your clubs. The teachers and governors who lead your school work hard to make it even better. Your families know that you go to a good school.

Although you do well in your writing, I have asked Mrs Dowsing and the teachers to help you do even better by looking at your writing more often, to see how well you are doing and what you need to learn next. You can help by continuing to try hard and do your best. There are some new ways of working coming up for children in the reception class and I have asked the teachers to make sure that these new things are included when they plan their work.

I hope you carry on enjoying your time at Cold Norton Primary School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector