

# Colne Engaine CE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115135
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311853
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Francis

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Julia King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jill James
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Green Farm Road Colne Engaine Colchester CO6 2HA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787222717
<b>Fax number</b>	01787222717

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of pupils' personal development, the quality of the curriculum and the impact of monitoring and evaluation on pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. Evidence was gathered from observing work in classrooms, scrutinising school documentation and records of pupils' achievement and progress, discussions with senior leaders in the school and with pupils and the views of parents through the questionnaire returns. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in a rural village outside Colchester. Most of the pupils attending the school come from the village. A few also travel some distance from neighbouring areas. The school has a good local reputation and is oversubscribed. Nearly all pupils are White British. Fewer than average pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is also below average. Almost all children in the Reception class have experience of attending local pre-school provision. With the small numbers, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is very variable from year to year but is generally around that expected for this age.

The school attained the 'Investors in People' award in 2003 and 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In their responses to the questionnaire, parents were full of praise for the school, particularly its leadership. In addition, there were many positive comments about their children's academic and personal development, 'this is a school with a great learning atmosphere'.

In line with the parents' views, and the school's own evaluation, the inspection judges this to be a school that provides a good, well-rounded education for its pupils. Not only do they achieve well, reaching above and sometimes well above, average standards by the end of Year 6, but the school's strong, positive culture also results in pupils' excellent personal development. These qualities are the product of a school with a purposeful and clearly defined ethos and a staff totally committed to developing the whole child. This is the result of exceptionally good leadership and guidance by the head teacher well supported by all staff, and an active and knowledgeable governing body.

Good leadership throughout the school is evident in the careful analysis, rigorous evaluation and effective target setting. The impact of this, seen across the school, is rooted in the excellent provision made for children in the Early Years class. While standards by Year 6 have generally been above the national average, more recently they have shown an upward trend. The latest results for 2007 show pupils at Year 6 attaining levels well above the national average in English, mathematics and science with many more than average achieving at the higher Level 5. The standards in English are quite exceptional with the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 being almost twice the national average. Much of this is due to the rigorous evaluation of pupils' writing skills and subsequent improvements to teaching and the curriculum. Achievement in mathematics, while good, lags a little behind the significant improvements in English and achievement in science. The school has identified that the pupils' rapid recall of tables and number bonds is not as good as it should be to enable them to apply these efficiently across all areas of their learning. Well-targeted support for those pupils who have learning difficulties ensures that most make good progress and generally achieve above the average for these groups.

Pupils' welfare has a very high priority in the school. Excellent systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety are securely in place and regularly reviewed. Attendance is good and the school has effective monitoring procedures. Well-planned learning comes through effective teaching and exceptionally good systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress. It is not only teachers who use the outcomes from these, pupils themselves have an excellent understanding of what they can do, their own targets, and what they need to do to further improve their work. As a result, they are confident and well motivated. Pupils are polite, friendly and have positive attitudes to the school and each other. Excellent provision has led to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils have an impressive understanding of different cultures. Teaching is good and parents commented on the 'outstanding commitment and enthusiasm' of the staff at the school, a view shared by pupils. All teachers have significant personal strengths and there are examples of exemplary practice. However, not all of this good practice is being identified clearly through, for example, close analysis of data or classroom observations and then used to raise the overall quality of teaching to the level of the best.

Much of the school's success comes through the exceptionally good curriculum. While the curriculum covers all of the required elements, the approach used, through whole school themes,

ensures pupils learn and apply their skills to a variety of situations. This is not a subject driven curriculum but involves teachers and pupils in planning the approaches within these themes. The focus of the school is very clearly on pupils becoming life long learners and developing thinking skills, independence and self-esteem. Students enjoy their learning through practical and investigative activities that ensure they gain a full understanding of what they study. Themes developed from approaches such as being a 'global citizen', 'a business man/woman', 'a scientist' or 'a historian', broaden pupils' perspective of what learning is about. This has a significant influence not just on the standards pupils achieve but especially so on their personal development. Through these approaches and high expectations of staff, pupils derive great enjoyment from their learning. They make extremely positive contributions to their school community and to the community at large. Behaviour is excellent and through the wide range of responsibilities they take on, such as the Year 6 'buddy system' for children in Reception, their personal development is outstanding. All of these activities contribute to the exceptionally good preparation for pupils' future well-being.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection, particularly in its development of information and communication technology, and with pupils' achievements over time, has a good capacity for continuing improvement. Given the outcomes for the pupils and the skilful management of the budget, the school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The excellent induction systems enable children to settle quickly and develop confidence. Over time, the school has been able to build well on this positive start and children make good progress. As a result, most reach or exceed, the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1, particularly in aspects such as personal, creative and physical development. Excellent provision in the Reception class has created many wonderful opportunities for children in the early years of their schooling. There is a careful match of the curriculum to the children's needs. The work is suitably adapted while retaining the core themes of the topics that are the strengths of the whole school provision. The strong emphasis on care and developing children's personal, social and health education gives them an excellent understanding of what they need to do to stay healthy and form good relationships. A good example of this provision is in the high level of care taken with the youngest children visiting their 'Forest Classroom' in a wood on the edge of the village. As well as good physical activity, children learn other life skills such as crossing roads safely, some of the wonders of nature and respect for the environment. Good recording systems enable teachers and teaching assistants to monitor children's progress and extend their skills and understanding.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' mental recall of tables and number bonds so they can improve their performance in mathematics and use these skills more effectively in all areas of their learning.
- Develop the skills of all teachers in classroom observation to improve their own teaching and to identify and spread the best practice seen throughout the school.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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	2

### 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	1

### 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?	1
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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**

2 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Colne Engaine CE Primary School, Colne Engaine, Colchester, CO6 2HA

Many of you will remember that I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making me so welcome. All of you that I talked with were very keen to share your work and ideas. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school. I hope that Mrs James will read this out to the new children just starting school so they know what exciting things they have to look forward to.

You tell me that you go to a good school and I certainly agree with you. Mrs James and all of the staff take good care of you. They also work very hard to make your school an exciting and interesting place to come to. You told me how much you enjoy your lessons, how interesting they are and how you work hard and try your best. I can see this in the way you work together and help each other and in some of the wonderful work I saw. I really liked the wide range of topics you do, and was very impressed with your Forest Classroom. You work very hard to help others, improve your school and carry out any jobs you are give extremely well. You also told me that everyone in school gets on well and I can see this in your excellent behaviour.

To help you do even better in mathematics I have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to improve your tables and number bonds. You can help by working hard on these not just at school but in spare minutes at home as well. I have also asked Mrs James and the teachers to do one other thing. When they are visiting classrooms, it would be very helpful to them and to you if they looked even more closely at what makes some of the lessons especially good and share these ideas with each other so everyone benefits.

John Francis

Lead inspector