

Colkirk Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121112
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313881
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Nason
Headteacher	Miss Anne Cottingham (temporary)
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	School Lane Colkirk Fakenham Norfolk NR21 7NW
Telephone number	01328862684
Fax number	01328862684

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Inspection number	313881

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

About three quarters of the pupils in this small school come from outside the immediate area. Almost all are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average in the school as a whole, and extremely high in some year groups. Of these pupils, a much higher proportion have statements of special educational need than in most schools. Quite a few pupils start here part way through their primary education, moving from other schools. The pupils who start in Reception generally have standards on entry that are similar to those expected nationally for four-year-olds. The school holds a Basic Skills Quality Mark, Artsmark, Football Association Charter Mark and Investors in People Award.

The school's former headteacher left at the end of the autumn term. An experienced headteacher has taken over for this term on a temporary basis and had been in school for just three days prior to the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Colkirk Primary School provides a good education that is rightly valued by pupils and their parents. One parent summed up the views of many when she wrote of her children 'making new friends, learning, developing confidence and having teachers they like and respect'. The school is a friendly and welcoming community. Pupils achieve well and typically leave at the age of 11 with standards that are above national averages. This is because they are taught well and because, for the size of the school, the curriculum offers an exceptionally wide range of relevant and interesting activities. Of particular note are the good start that children receive in the Reception class, high quality pastoral care and the effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Pupils make good progress in the key academic skills of literacy, numeracy and science. Good care, guidance and support ensure that they also do well in their personal development, demonstrating enjoyment in learning and good behaviour. They develop confidence and respect for others and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. All ages work and play very well together, with the older pupils willingly mixing with and guiding the younger ones. Pupils know that their views are valued and they have regular influence on how the school is organised, for example through the school and class councils. The school forges very close links with the village community and the local parish and this encourages pupils to act as good young citizens.

Pupils learn effectively because they are taught well. The teachers and support staff work closely together to cater for the wide range of age and ability in each class. Individual progress is assessed and tracked efficiently. The resulting information is used well to plan activities and to ensure pupils build up their learning systematically and efficiently. The quality of individual lessons varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Part of this variation is because the school has experienced some disruption to staffing which has been outside its control. The school's leaders and managers have worked hard to minimise the impact of this on pupils. They acknowledge that there has been some loss of continuity leading to instances of uneven progress, especially in Years 2 and 3. The quality of teachers' marking and general feedback to pupils is also too patchy across the school. As a result, the pupils are not involved enough in understanding how well they are doing and what they can do to improve their own learning.

The school is led and managed well. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of its effectiveness and how it can improve further. The temporary headteacher already has an accurate picture of the school. She has the skills necessary for interim leadership. She is supported extremely well by the acting deputy headteacher, who is an experienced and competent practitioner, particularly valued by parents and pupils in her role in co-ordinating the arrangements for pupils who find learning more difficult. The teaching staff monitor pupils' standards and the quality of provision well. The governors give good support and have been instrumental in ensuring that the school does the best it can to cope with staff changes. Since the last inspection in 2002, there has been significant improvement in many aspects of the school and it is well placed to continue to provide well for its pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children do well in Reception. By the time they start Year 1, attainment is above the levels expected nationally in all areas of learning. The indoor accommodation available to this class is cramped and isolated from the rest of the school. There is no separate outdoor learning area. The teacher and teaching assistants work hard and successfully to minimise the impact of these constraints. However, they struggle to leave resources outdoors during breaks because the playground is fairly small and is needed for all age groups. Staff plan varied activities that enable children to work well with adults and also to be independent. Regular and wide-ranging assessments of individual progress are used well to ensure that teaching matches children's needs. The provision is led and managed very well by the acting deputy headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Eliminate the variation in the quality of teaching so that pupils' learning in all lessons is at least good.
- Improve the ways pupils are given feedback in general, and marking in particular, to involve them more effectively in their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. This includes those who need extra support and those who find learning easier. In the years since the school's last inspection, standards at the milestones of the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 have varied. This has meant that overall performance has sometimes been below the national average. This was the case in Year 2 last year and significantly affects the current Year 6. Conversely, at times results have been exceptionally high, as in 2005 when pupils reached standards that put them over a year ahead of pupils nationally. Overall, the trend in Key Stage 2 results in particular has risen well. In general, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and have the academic and social skills that will equip them well in later life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Effective teaching and care produce enthusiastic, considerate pupils who are positive about learning and who make an outstanding contribution to their community. When asked about behaviour in school, pupils expressed surprise that bullying should be mentioned, stating that it does not happen. They say that, even if it did, it would not be tolerated by either pupils or staff. Pupils' commitment to healthy, sociable living is typified by their enthusiasm for physical activity and for the wide range of clubs available. Attendance rates are average but are adversely affected by termtime holidays which are occasionally quite prolonged. The school is working with other local schools to alert parents to the impact of these and of any other absence which is not essential.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching draws well on the detailed knowledge that staff have of individual pupils. In addition to pupils being well known personally, the systems for assessing and analysing their academic progress are effective. Pupils say that most lessons are interesting and help them learn, although a few are understandably concerned about any disruption caused by staff absence and change. Teachers make good links between subjects and tailor work to the wide range of capabilities in each class. They use computers and interactive whiteboards well to enliven lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Staff do all in their power to provide an outstanding range of activities. In spite of the limitations of the building and site, activities are planned to cover both the full range of required subjects and to provide extremely good access to additional activities. Parents and friends of the school contribute regularly to the extensive programme of clubs and visits. The use of off-site facilities, especially in physical education, goes a long way to compensate for the lack of playground and hall space.

Current initiatives to improve reading and writing further for all pupils are very well focused and based on detailed analysis of pupils' progress. Planning for pupils who need additional support is very good and results in clear individual learning plans. There is very effective provision for pupils with particular gifts or talents who are given extra support to achieve their potential in basic skills and also set challenges around the school. A good homework programme is enhanced very well by the school website which provides pupils and parents with access to additional relevant activities to support learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The day-to-day care of pupils is of high quality, drawing on the close links between home and school. There are excellent procedures to safeguard pupils and promote their health and safety and they are checked regularly. One of the governors is especially vigilant and efficient in this respect. The arrangements for pupils who are vulnerable in any way are managed very well, including effective links with external agencies, such as health services. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory with some important good elements. Pupils are given relevant personal and group targets. They often get good oral feedback on their work but say that this does not necessarily focus enough on their targets. The quality of written feedback varies too much. It is often well focused and relevant but some is no more than cursory or too complex for pupils to find useful. In general, marking too rarely identifies the next steps for improvement. Pupils are not encouraged often enough to reflect on their work or make a direct response to the feedback they receive, such as by correcting errors or practising a skill they have not quite grasped.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are at a stage of transition pending the appointment of a new headteacher. Nonetheless, the success of previous work to improve the leadership roles of other staff and of governors means that the school is in good shape to continue to provide well for pupils in the interim. Teachers have developed their self-evaluation and monitoring skills well since the last inspection and governors are active, questioning and knowledgeable. The main school improvement plan gives a useful summary of current priorities. However, the measures for judging the success of initiatives contained in the plan are not always focused enough on the intended benefits for pupils. Good partnerships have been established with parents and with schools and other organisations locally. This is a school that is not complacent and shows the determination to keep improving its provision for the pupils in its care.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	1
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.

Annex A

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 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 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Colkirk Church of England Primary School, Colkirk, Fakenham, NR21 7NW

I am writing to thank you for your welcome and help when I visited your school recently. It was obvious that you enjoy school, behave well and get on so well together. I was glad to find that you have good teachers and make good progress. If you need some extra help in lessons, you are supported well. At the same time, the staff encourage you to be independent whenever possible.

Your lessons are generally interesting and successful. As a result, most of you do well in your work by the time you are in Year 6 and you are well prepared for secondary school. I was particularly impressed by how many extra activities your school offers. You told me how much you enjoy taking part in sport, music, chess, pottery, the after-school club...the list goes on and on. No wonder you are such a healthy and sociable lot! You work and play very safely together.

You have already made Miss Cottingham welcome and she is helping your school continue to do well until a new headteacher is found. The other teachers and the governors are all playing their part in this too. Some of your parents are concerned about the changes of teacher that you have had recently. This is understandable and I have asked the staff and governors to do all they can to make sure that your lessons are as good as possible, whoever your teacher is.

I think your school can improve in another way too. I have asked the adults to give you more information about how well you are getting on and to make sure you have time to act on their advice. I would like you to have more information about your achievements so that you can take more responsibility for your own learning as you get older.

It was a pleasure finding out about your school. Keep enjoying all it has to offer you!

Best wishes

Mrs Helen Ranger

Lead inspector