

Colneis Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 124624 |
| Local Authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 314990 |
| Inspection date | 4 December 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Ruth Frith |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 306 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ms Helen Treen |
| Headteacher | Mrs Jane Reed |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 April 2005 |
| School address | Colneis Road Felixstowe Suffolk IP11 9HH |
| Telephone number | 01394 284052 |
| Fax number | 01394 273425 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils' personal development.
- The effectiveness of assessment, teachers' marking, the tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of targets.

The inspector gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation form, lesson observations, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, pupils' work, information that the school keeps on how well pupils are doing, the school development plan and an analysis of the parents' questionnaire responses. 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 this report.

Description of the school

Colneis is situated in the port of Felixstowe and is larger than many junior schools. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils come from outside the immediate area in which the school is situated. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. Many enter school with attainment in writing that is similar to that usually seen in children of this age whilst attainment in reading and mathematics is above. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is high. Most pupils are White British with a small number coming from a range of different cultural backgrounds. A few speak English as an additional language. The school federated with Fairfield Infant School in September 2008. At this time, the headteacher of the Infant School also became the headteacher of Colneis Junior School.

The school has received Healthy Schools accreditation in recognition of its work.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where the outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support given to pupils results in their excellent personal development and well-being and significantly above average standards. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and they respond very well to the challenges set. Key features of the school's success stem from its strong ethos and the teamwork of staff who are all working well under the good leadership of the new headteacher. Successful practice continues well alongside new initiatives that focus on improving the rate of pupils' progress. A new system to track pupils' achievement is in its infancy and allows teachers to more quickly identify those in danger of falling behind, so that appropriate additional support can be provided and challenging targets set.

In 2008, the Year 6 national test results show a continuation of above average standards in English, mathematics and science, with the percentage of pupils gaining a grade higher than that expected for their age in writing being double the county average. The percentage gaining this higher level for mathematics was slightly below the county average. National averages are not currently available for comparison. Staff are not complacent and continually look for ways to improve their practice in order to raise standards. The result of their successful work is seen in pupils' good quality writing. This has been achieved through a range of strategies that give pupils much clearer guidance on how they can improve their written work, and activities that fully engage their interests. In response to the slightly disappointing mathematics results at Level 5 in 2008, teachers are focusing more on problem-solving and mental mathematics. Assessment data, work in lessons and in pupils' books show that all groups of pupils are progressing well and are on course to meet their challenging targets in English and mathematics, including the more able and those with English as an additional language. Artwork on display is of a high standard and reflects good learning in art across many different subjects and media.

A key feature of the successful teaching is the way in which staff use a range of teaching methods and activities which match well to pupils' learning styles in each class. Much learning is practical and actively engages pupils, for example, when they learn about fractions by working with the segments of a mandarin orange. This quickly grips their attention and motivates them to learn. Planning is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn and share this with them so pupils are clear about what is expected of them and how they can improve their work. Teachers' use of questioning is very effective in developing pupils' thinking and assessing their understanding. This is particularly so in mathematics where pupils are asked to explain how they work out the answer and whether they could do it another way. This supports the good progress of all pupils, especially the higher-attainers. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those who find some aspects of English and mathematics difficult, so they too make good progress. Pupils who find learning easier than others also make good progress because work is given which matches their abilities and maintains their interest. Assessment is good. Teachers set challenging targets and make useful comments in books so that pupils know what they have done well and understand how they can improve. Staff are becoming more familiar with evaluating the evidence provided by the new tracking system, so that they have a clearer understanding of the impact of their work on pupils' progress from entry to Year 6.

An important element of the school's curriculum is the way in which it is used to engender excitement and enjoyment in learning. Pupils' attendance is above average. There is frequently a buzz of excitement in lessons, as pupils work together in response to the interesting tasks

set. In one lesson, Year 6 pupils worked enthusiastically, developing their problem-solving skills as they used their knowledge of shapes and scale to plan a 'Jurashape Park' containing an interesting range of pre-historic animals such as a 'rhombusaurus'. Exceptionally good links between subjects, and the focus on developing pupils' thinking skills through a curriculum that encourages individual creativity, make learning easier and more relevant. Information and communication technology is used well by teachers and pupils. A very good range of popular clubs and visits develop pupils' skills and encourage a particularly good understanding of the local and wider community. Regular high quality stage productions and events such as the Christmas Fair successfully develop pupils' skills and involve the local community very well. The school's teaching and the curriculum are used very effectively to increase pupils' understanding of Britain and international communities and help pupils to understand others, value diversity and promote shared values.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Assemblies make a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development and help to create a strong sense of community. The personal, social and health education programme is very effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and awareness of their actions on others. This results in excellent behaviour and helps to create a harmonious community in which learning can successfully take place. The very small minority of pupils who find it difficult to behave well is supported extremely effectively. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school and wider community and show this through their consideration for others, whether it be by becoming members of the school council, helping each other at playtimes or raising funds for charities. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives through eating a balanced diet and taking part in plenty of physical activities. The extensive gardening club provides food for the school kitchen and enables pupils to take responsibility for the garden areas as well as gain first prize in the town gardening competition. Pupils have a good understanding of their place in a culturally diverse society and are aware of issues such as racial harassment and bullying. They feel safe in school and give many examples of what they would do if they felt unsafe outside school. A very small number of parents raised concerns about bullying in the questionnaires and the school is continuing to review its already effective work in this area to ensure it offers the best possible support and guidance. The combination of good literacy and numeracy skills and pupils' highly developed personal skills equips them extremely well for the next stage of education and life. They are excellent team workers, show high levels of respect for others and are developing as confident young citizens.

The outstanding quality of care for pupils is seen in the high level of commitment of staff. Central to the ethos and vision of the school is the focus on promoting equality of opportunity and creating an enjoyable learning environment where pupils do well. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed, and health and safety are managed carefully. Those at risk of underachieving are identified quickly, and the school is successful in supporting pupils who have found it difficult to settle elsewhere. The school's work in partnership with a wide range of agencies is excellent. Particularly good links with the infant and secondary schools ensure a good continuity of learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school with an aim to develop well-rounded and independent thinking children who love learning. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and a strong team of staff, who share this vision and are fully committed to the school and local community. Staff with management responsibilities fulfil their roles well and are involved in the school's self-evaluation, which is accurate and highlights clearly what the school does well and how it can improve. Governors

fulfil their responsibilities well and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They monitor the school through regular visits and their work in committees. Together with staff they make a very strong contribution to community cohesion through their roles with partners in the local community. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school, as the following typical comment indicates. 'The staff are always supportive and approachable and in my view are committed to maximising each child's potential through imaginative learning'. Effective leadership, management and self-evaluation and good improvement since the last inspection indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the implementation of the recently introduced tracking system so that staff can more easily evaluate how well pupils are doing and thereby ensure their best possible progress from year to year.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are 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 |
| The extent to which 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

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 1 |
| 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Colneis Junior School, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9HH

You may remember that I visited your school recently and talked to you about your work. I really enjoyed my visit, and would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome. I was particularly moved by the lovely letters of welcome that were waiting for me. I agree with you and your parents and think that Colneis is a good school. This is down to you, your parents, staff and governors. If you read on you will see some of the things I found out.

- You make good progress because the teaching is good and you focus on your learning. Well done!
- You thoroughly enjoy school and behave exceptionally well. You get on extremely well with each other and work together in a very good way.
- You come to school regularly and on time. Well Done! Please keep it up so you do not miss any important learning.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and I am very pleased to see that this is influencing what you eat and how much exercise you take.
- Those of you who sometimes find it difficult to learn are helped a lot. I saw some of you trying very hard to finish your work.
- You feel safe in school because staff look after you well. I was pleased to hear that you know what to do if you have a problem.

Mrs Reed leads and manages the school well and staff and governors give her lots of help. They have all agreed to make your learning even better by tracking more closely how well you are doing so that you make the best possible progress. I know you will help them by trying as hard as you can.

I left with fond memories of your school and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector