

Colebrook Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126268
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	328475
Inspection date	28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	113
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Paul
Headteacher	Sue Carvey
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Towcester Road Lower Stratton Swindon SN3 4AS
Telephone number	01793 331960
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How effectively the school provides sufficient challenge for the most able children to develop their writing skills in the mixed-age classes in Key Stage 1.
- The children's attainment when they start school, and how well the curriculum in the Reception classes helps them to make progress.

The evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of information about pupils' progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, and analysis of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

The school is smaller than average. The open-plan design and uneven cohort sizes mean that children in Key Stage 1 are taught in mixed-age classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in two Reception classes. When children start school in the Reception class, their skills and experiences are broadly as expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than average. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and many of this group are also learning to speak English as an additional language. In 2007, the school was awarded Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is highly valued by the parents. All of the parents said their children enjoy school and many comment on the excellent and friendly way that the school works in partnership with them. One summed up the views of many in writing, 'I would recommend the school to anyone.' Many others comment on the good progress their children make. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 because children make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost half the children reach the higher Level 3 in reading. Good care is taken to ensure that children from minority ethnic groups and those learning to speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress.

Children behave extremely well in their lessons and all around the school. They are exceptionally considerate of one another and this stems from the very good models set by the staff. Care for pupils is good and at the heart of the school's success. The individual support plans for children who have learning difficulties are exceptionally good. They are well designed so that children view them as something very special, and written clearly so that children in this group know exactly what their special targets are. Other children do not know what they need to do to reach the next steps in their learning because the school has not decided on a system of setting learning targets. Consequently, staff do not always check that activities are designed to help children increase their skills. This has slowed the progress of the most able children in developing their writing skills. Their progress is satisfactory. However, fewer able children reach the higher level in writing than in reading. The activities provided for this group are often not challenging enough to ensure they increase their skills at a good rate.

Activities across the curriculum capture children's interest so that they are happy in their work and have good attitudes to learning. A lot of thought is put into making the curriculum fun for the children. The school nurse recently showed children some of the techniques of modern nursing, and left some bandages that children were enthusiastically experimenting with as they learned about the nursing skills of Mary Seacole. Displays all around the school reflect a wide and exciting curriculum, and teachers' high expectations. The school council knowledgeably explained how all the children work hard to stay healthy and take care of the environment.

Good teaching is characterised by very good relationships so that children feel confident and well supported and make good progress in lessons all across the curriculum. Children's secure information and communication technology skills play a strong part in the good development of skills to help them in later life. Their good attendance adds to this preparation. They are involved in many community activities that are designed to help them understand the local community, and how other communities in England differ from the local area. School leaders reviewed the curriculum and realised that children would benefit from more opportunities to learn about communities around the world. Many exciting projects are planned, for example one that will provide a link with schools in The Gambia. Governors play a strong part in ensuring that the school is an asset to the local community.

Good leadership and management lie behind the school's success. Staff and governors know the school well and focus consistently on how to improve children's education. Leaders take great care to ensure that the school continues to provide a safe, welcoming and well-organised environment, where children feel confident and are happy to learn, and this is reflected in the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'I feel that the school has provided a first class start to my child's overall development and education', wrote one parent whose views are echoed by many others. The very well organised learning area reflects the high expectations of EYFS leaders and staff. Children learn and develop well because lessons are exciting and provide them with plenty of opportunities to work and play independently and together. Activities are challenging so that children learn new things at a good rate. For example, they learned about zero by organising sets of toy puppies and recording number sentences to show that some sets had no puppies in them. As a result, children make good progress in EYFS overall and, by the time they leave the Reception class, standards are above average. However, standards vary widely from year to year. Ongoing assessment observations are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. The rigorous approach to assessment is contributing well to the development of consistently good attainment. Teaching assistants are particularly skilled in supporting children who find learning more difficult.

Children's personal development is outstanding, and they are confident, happy and enthusiastic. For example, children were engrossed in making up an alternative ending for the story of Goldilocks. Their novel ideas were frequently punctuated with giggles of delight. They work very well together, cooperating and helping each other throughout the day. Children are meticulous about hygiene and can be trusted to work and play safely both indoors and outside. Children are cared for exceptionally well. Every effort is made to involve as many parents as possible. For example, meetings with new parents are arranged on Saturday mornings in response to parents' requests. One new parent commented, 'This was really helpful.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that writing activities for the most able children are well matched to their needs and enable them to reach higher standards.
- Ensure that staff and children know precisely what the next steps for learning are in reading, writing and mathematics, and carefully monitor progress towards the learning targets.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

28 January 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Colebrook Infant School, Swindon SN3 4AS

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. Your school is good and you make good progress, so that standards are above average for those of you in Year 2. The staff and governors work well together to help you to succeed at school. Teaching is good in all the classes, and there are a lot of interesting activities for you to do.

Here are the things that are best about your school:

- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You are especially good at helping each other and making sure everyone feels safe.
- Your beautiful artwork makes the school look really good.
- The headteacher and all the staff have made your parents feel completely welcome.
- Children in the Reception classes are cared for extremely well.
- Children who find learning more difficult have exceptionally good special plans to help them improve their work.

There are some things that could be even better. We have asked the school to make sure that writing activities are more challenging for children who are good at writing. We have also asked the school to make sure that you all know what you need to learn next to make your work even better, and to check your work carefully to make sure that you are all making good progress towards your learning targets. You can help by checking your work every day to make sure you have done everything the teacher asked.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely

Liz Kounnou

Lead inspector