

# Colnbrook School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 117670            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Hertfordshire     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 326659            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 3–4 December 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Alan Lemon        |

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.

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| <b>Type of school</b>  | Special   |
| <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 (total)   | 84  |
| 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   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Mr Bernard Bell   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mr Richard Hill   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 5 October 2005  |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected  |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected  |
| <b>School address</b>  | Hayling Road<br>South Oxhey<br>Watford<br>Hertfordshire<br>WD19 7UY |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 02084281281   |
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|--------------------------|-------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Colnbrook School provides education for primary-aged pupils. In addition, there is a small number of children in their Reception year entitled to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. All pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities covered by statements of special educational need. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and those with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) each account for approximately one third each of the school's population. A smaller number have severe learning difficulties (SLD) and a few have speech, language and communication difficulties. The range of learning difficulties means attainment on entry varies considerably and is very low compared to age related expectations. The school makes additional provision for pupils with the most complex needs. Jigsaw caters for those pupils who have pronounced difficulties with communication, language and literacy. The ASD base gives intensive support to severely autistic pupils in Key Stage 1 before they join their class group.

Colnbrook provides a substantial amount of support to mainstream schools with their pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It also has links with mainstream schools promoting the arts and sports mainly, which has led to it achieving the Inclusion Mark in September 2008. The school has achieved many other awards in recognition of its educational and other provision such as the Basic Skills Quality Mark, ActiveMark and the Healthy School Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Colnbrook is an outstanding school. It was judged outstanding in its last inspection and has continued to improve, providing exceptionally good value for money. Every aspect of the school's work has benefited enormously from its leadership's knowledge, very clear direction, strong values and high expectations. The school has an excellent capacity to continue improving. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress in developing communication, literacy and numeracy skills and in using information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' outstanding personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, strongly underpins their excellent achievement. It prepares them exceedingly well for secondary education. A great many parents have drawn attention to their children's achievements and superlatives such as 'wonderful progress', 'come on leaps and bounds', are typical of many.

Parents' comments recognise that this school is very special because it very effectively achieves unexpected transformations in their children which others had previously failed to accomplish. A very positive ethos of care, support and encouragement pervades every aspect of the school's work, which ensures all pupils are valued, nurtured and kept safe. The care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. With the considerable encouragement of the school, all pupils develop, and a great many appreciate, a healthy lifestyle. The emphasis on pupils' being independent and responsible means they contribute much to school life. Its numerous links with the community means pupils contribute in many ways, through sports and the choir in particular. This forms part of the school's overall excellent contribution to community cohesion.

The staff possess a considerable knowledge and understanding of pupils which they use exceptionally well in meeting their needs. For the school, staff development is the lynchpin of its success and training stays in constant focus. Out of the skills and expertise of staff is developed excellent provision for tackling pupils' learning difficulties and other needs. There is very little turnover of staff and they form very effective teams, especially in the classroom. Teaching and learning are outstanding, as a result. Staff use their knowledge of pupils to build a rapport that captures interest and attention. Their expectations are high; they keep pupils engaged in learning for the whole lesson and working at a fast pace. Teaching methods match pupils' learning needs well. The intensive work in the ASD base and in Jigsaw is excellent. Resources in lessons are very carefully chosen and ICT is used to very good effect.

Communication is promoted by a wide variety of strategies using signs, symbols and good emphasis on pupils speaking and listening. The curriculum, including EYFS, provides an excellent range of learning opportunities, which are hugely enriched by many activities capturing pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However, the links between planned activities and the EYFS areas of learning are not made sufficiently explicit. Pupils enjoy school greatly and all of the activities they take part in at school and beyond contribute enormously to achievement, social skills and self-confidence. Clubs are very popular as are the huge number of sports pupils' play. Physical education is a real strength of the school, reflected in the many sporting awards it and pupils have gained.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children's personal development and well-being is outstanding. They learn suitable hygiene and social practices, and choose to eat a wider range of healthy foods. They accept routines

and expectations and increasingly are willing to participate in activities. The children enjoy school, particularly physical and outdoor activities. Their improving personal development helps the children make sense of the world, understand and learn rapidly. As a result, they make outstanding progress which is clearly shown in their detailed assessments.

Leadership and management are outstanding and staff are very effective. They know each child very well and activities are very well planned in relation to their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are kept safe and their physical, emotional and health needs are very well addressed. Additional assessment records are kept appropriate to the age group, and the managers have ensured that all EYFS welfare requirements are met. Partnerships with parents and professionals are excellent and parents are very happy with their children's progress.

The playground has been refurbished and now has a sheltered area for outside play and learning all year round. In meeting children's needs the curriculum covers EYFS requirements, although in planning it is not sufficiently clear how children's work and activities relate to the areas of learning in the EYFS.

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

- Match the curriculum for Reception children to the requirements of EYFS and, where necessary, improve provision where any mismatch occurs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make excellent progress as a result of the high quality of teaching, curriculum and support. These are all finely tuned to meeting the complexity and wide range of pupils' needs, whether MLD, SLD or ASD. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils made rapid progress particularly in relation to communication, independence and social interaction. Pupils develop in confidence, fit willingly into routines, communicate and happily take part with others in work and activities. The school has collected data on progress for many years and has been very effective in ensuring its validity and accuracy. Data shows by the measured increases in levels of attainment that the great majority of pupils are making excellent progress in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. Whilst only relatively small amounts of data are collected for other subjects it is clear from pupils' work, particularly in history, art and physical education that they are achieving standards that are high in relation to their capabilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

As pupils settle and benefit from the school's outstanding provision, so their confidence and self-esteem grow. They enjoy school very much, for example shooting up their hands and saying 'me, me!' when volunteering to answer a question. Their attendance, behaviour and relationships are outstanding. Pupils feel safe at school, and know they can turn to staff if in need. They are kind and considerate to one another, and polite and friendly to visitors. Incidents of bullying or harassment are rare and addressed quickly. The pupils understand many aspects of staying healthy. They know that exercise is beneficial, and often say their favourite activities are sports. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities and are very proud of their achievements. Colnbrook's strong community ethos provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to participate in wider community events, particularly sporting and creative activities. They learn about other cultures and historical

times, and to help those less fortunate than themselves. This supports pupils' social, moral and cultural development and community cohesion very effectively.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's strong commitment to the professional development of its staff has meant teachers and their assistants work very effectively as teams promoting learning. They are all expert in meeting the needs of pupils and they know them extremely well. This is most obvious in the excellent teaching of literacy in Jigsaw and, equally, the severely autistic pupils in Key Stage 1. The assessments of all pupils are thorough, and made more comprehensive by the very good contributions of specialists, such as speech and language therapists. Assessment is used very effectively to adapt work to each pupil's needs and to identify appropriate learning outcomes in each lesson. The very positive rapport built by classroom staff really engages pupils, encouraging them to communicate in the ways most appropriate to them. Pupils learn to work individually and in groups; they do so with growing independence and manage responsibilities for learning as a result of the encouragement from staff. Expectations are high and learning proceeds at a fast pace, all promoted effectively by the challenging targets set for each class.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The whole curriculum has considerable breadth reflecting the national curriculum. Moreover, pupils' work and activities are also matched closely to their learning difficulties, capabilities and interests. This applies in particular to the few children in their Reception year, where there is a very good programme for dealing with all their learning difficulties. Planning in Key Stages 1 and 2 uses the national curriculum very imaginatively, especially by threading a topic or theme, such as World War II or the Christmas Story, through all the subjects studied by pupils. In addition to generating much interest in learning, topics focus exceptionally well on promoting basic skills in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. Well-developed links with other schools enable pupils to work and play alongside their mainstream peers, helping their progress in many ways and social skills in particular.

The curriculum is enriched in a great many ways, through several popular club activities, the arts and sports. These all stand out as strengths in promoting learning and progress and, because they involve lots of links outside the school, contribute significantly towards community cohesion.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

All the required procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare and safety are in place, rigorously applied and closely monitored by staff and the governing body. Staff know each pupil very well so that any change in behaviour or response is immediately noted and addressed suitably. Staff treat pupils with great respect, and the care and concern for each individual is very evident. Pupils and parents are given outstanding support when the time comes for pupils to transfer to secondary education. The outstanding teamwork between class staff and professionals such as speech and language therapists ensure that pupils receive consistent support and guidance to learn and develop. The outreach service provides high quality, very well received support

for local schools and the Jigsaw group, in which extra communication and behaviour support is given to certain pupils, is an outstanding aspect of the school's provision. The school has well-established systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. The information gained is closely analysed and underpins the challenging targets set for each pupil, and the level of their work in lessons. Parents are happy with the information they receive on their children's progress and the annual reports are detailed and of high quality.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

All of the school's work and its involvement and contribution to the community are inspired by the commitment and enthusiasm of the headteacher and his deputy. The contribution to community cohesion is excellent. Leaders are a particularly effective team generating extremely strong team work throughout the school. The school's many strengths, such as outreach support, provision for arts and sports, pupils' clubs, Jigsaw and ASD provision are all the products of teachers' and others' very effective leadership. There is a sharp focus on continuous improvement. Monitoring and evaluation is at the heart of this. The tracking of pupils' progress and observing teaching and learning are particular strengths, leading to identifying priorities for improving pupils' achievement and further staff training needs. Governors are very active in their work, with regular planned visits and receipt of detailed reports from staff. This keeps them fully abreast of developments and enables them to use their considerable experience to support the school.

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## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b> | <b>School Overall</b> |
|--|-----------------------|

**Overall effectiveness**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 1   |
| 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  | 1   |

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>       | 1 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 1 |
| 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?                     | 1 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 1 |

**Achievement and standards**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress                           | 1 |

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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  | 1 |
| 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 1 |
| 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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   |
| 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  | 1   |
| 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  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| 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 Pupils

Inspection of Colnbrook School Watford WD19 7UY

Many thanks for your warm welcome and friendliness during my visit to your school. I want to thank the members of the school council who gave their time to share their views. This was very helpful to me in making up my mind on what I should say about your school.

I am very pleased to report that your school is outstanding. It was outstanding when inspectors last visited, three years ago, and you are still getting top marks. This is because all of the staff work very hard and do their jobs really well. Your headteacher makes sure they have everything they need so you have the very best school.

You too have helped make your school as good as it is, especially by working so hard in lessons, behaving very well and being really helpful in every way you can. The progress you are making is outstanding. A healthy lifestyle, staying safe and contributing generously in school and beyond are all part and parcel of your great enthusiasm.

There is not much more I can ask your headteacher to do to improve your school. Since there have been changes to the way the youngest pupils in school are taught, I have asked your headteacher to make sure everything for them is as up-to-date as possible.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector