

Colston Bassett School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	891/6031
Unique Reference Number	135366
Inspection number	322238
Inspection dates	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Colston Bassett School is a selective co-educational independent day school in rural Nottinghamshire. The school's building is a former village primary school with its own extensive grounds incorporating a hard play area, field and garden. It opened in 2007 as a response to requests from parents requiring continuity of education for their children upon leaving Millfield Nursery in a village nearby. It is owned and managed by the proprietors of the nursery but is open to all. The school's aim is to provide pupils with a safe and caring environment in which each individual can flourish. The school motto is 'Vitae Discimus' or 'We learn for life' with an ethos based on Christian principles.

The school is registered to provide education for up to 72 pupils aged four to 11 years. It provides a curriculum broadly based on the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. The curriculum for Key Stage 2 pupils has already been planned in readiness for this age group. There are currently five pupils on roll who are either from the village or the rural community nearby. There are no pupils currently with a statement of special educational need or who speak English as an additional language. This is the school's first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Colston Bassett School is a new school providing a good quality of education and outstanding care for its pupils. A very committed staff team ensure that the school is a happy place to be, with strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils make good progress and achieve well; they grow in confidence through a well balanced curriculum and good teaching which develops them emotionally, physically and intellectually. Pupils are receiving the same quality of provision that would be expected if the school was at full capacity. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and so are the pupils. The school meets all of the independent school regulations and its aims and objectives.

Quality of education

The quality of education is good with some outstanding aspects. The curriculum is good. It makes exceptionally good use of the outdoors for learning, including very regular walks into the village and surrounding countryside. Activities which enthuse the pupils often take place in the outdoor play area or garden. The curriculum is broad and is indirectly based on the six areas of learning as outlined in the

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the programme of study for Year 1, following the National Curriculum. It is adapted well according to children's interests and needs. Staff ensure that children are allowed to work things out for themselves and develop good thinking skills. Pupils make good progress towards the early learning goals, which they are likely to exceed by the end of the Reception Year, and in all the other subject areas. They make exceptional progress in their reading, writing and numeracy. This is because of the strong emphasis given to core skills and the high quality individual support each pupil receives. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of carefully chosen topics, visitors to the school and well chosen visits outside school, such as a trip to nearby Belvoir Castle. Pupils clearly benefit from the breadth provided and are proud of their achievements. The school is very well resourced and makes good use of information and communication technology and the mobile library. Wherever possible, pupils learn in enjoyable and practical ways. They enjoy the approach to the teaching of Foundation subjects where staff successfully interweave history, geography, religious education and design and technology. There is a real buzz of enthusiasm and excitement in lessons. Schemes of work have been very thoroughly prepared, although the curricula for music and citizenship are less detailed. Although small and growing, the school nonetheless puts on performances such as the Christmas Nativity, and facilities for sports are good and are popular with the pupils.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and sometimes it is outstanding. Staff have high expectations for both behaviour and standards of work. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. The most successful lessons are those where pupils engage in their learning quickly and the activities are matched to the breadth of abilities within the class appropriately. Staff continually check on pupils' progress, enabling them to understand fully where there is a necessity to repeat or consolidate learning. The needs of the more able pupils are planned for very well. Just occasionally, other pupils are set work which is slightly too difficult and before they are ready. Systems of assessment are established and influence the planning of the curriculum.

The school has reliable 'attainment on entry' information from its sister nursery and this creates a solid baseline for each pupil. The school is rightly prioritising the further development of assessment systems to ensure that it is able to compare pupils' achievement with national norms. Because there are so few pupils currently on roll, staff do not always record their observations of pupils formally to support the assessment overall. All pupils have positive attitudes to learning and participate fully in lessons. There are opportunities to learn independently and in a group and pupils are always very supportive of each other. They have individual targets and staff use these to make clear the expectations for their learning. Pupils' work in books is thoroughly marked and they are given time to make corrections and improve. Teaching and learning are enhanced by the vibrant and stimulating school environment which is enlivened with high quality displays and pupils' work. It also benefits from exceptionally strong links with parents, providing them with high quality information to aid the home/school partnership. Pupils make good progress

because their achievements are acknowledged; they are given much praise and encouragement. They all thrive in the 'can do' culture that pervades the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are given time to discuss their feelings and opinions. They express delight as they develop a knowledge and understanding of the world about them. They have a good awareness of public services and institutions, for example, through visits to the school from the police and fire fighters. Pupils are taught to respect each other and the adults in school. All are learning how to work alongside others and to develop tolerance and understanding. The school is welcoming to all families and is already beginning to make links with the local community and other schools.

Pupils make a significant contribution to their own school community. A sense of caring for each other is nurtured and there is much mutual support within the group. Pupils have time to reflect within their lessons and also in their daily ten minute 'thought for the day' session. Pupils' cultural understanding is supported through the curriculum and the celebrations from different faiths. Through the school's strong moral framework, tolerance of different beliefs and cultures is promoted. Expectations, including those for pupils' behaviour, are made clear and pupils understand these. They respect the orderly school environment and its resources. Behaviour is very well managed and is therefore outstanding. Pupils always display kindness and consideration to each other. They are aware of keeping themselves and others safe as they move about the school sensibly. The school strives to provide a good quality hot meal at lunchtime and pupils always have a piece of fruit at morning break. They have permanent access to water and the youngest children also have a drink of milk each day. Pupils understand the importance of looking after their bodies and the contribution that physical exercise makes to this. The pupils have many varied opportunities to be physically active. In all such ways, including excellent attention to pupils' basic skills, there is good preparation for their future general and economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding and meets all the relevant regulations. Staff supervise pupils well. Pupils are taught to be aware of potential hazards and how to be safe when working and playing together. Suitable routines are in place to promote hygienic practice. Pupils' well-being is underpinned by a very comprehensive range of policies which all staff are familiar with. Staff thoroughly assess risks around the school and prior to outings to avoid any potential hazards. The school takes steps to ensure that pupils' medical and dietary needs are met. The school is fully inclusive and meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. It plans exceptionally well for all pupils.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school has appropriate recruitment procedures in place to ensure that all staff and volunteers have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. A central staff register has been implemented and training in safeguarding pupils has been undertaken by the proprietor in line with the latest statutory requirements. All staff and proprietors have had the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies a former maintained village school building with an extensive outdoor play area, providing excellent facilities for pupils to learn and play outdoors which is used all through the year. There is also a spacious hall which ensures that pupils have access to space for physical activity whatever the weather. The school has made satisfactory arrangements for looking after pupils who are ill. The premises are maintained well and are cleaned to a high standard.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Regular, very high quality newsletters focus on the forthcoming curriculum, visits, future dates for the diary and helpful hints to parents to help their children learn at home. The school's prospectus contains all the necessary information. Parents praise the school and the very good progress their children are making. There are termly reports which are comprehensive and make clear the pupils' progress. Their levels of attainment in the different subjects and, for younger pupils, their progress towards the early learning goals are not yet detailed here. All of the curriculum documents and the plans for pupils' learning are available for parents to view. Staff provide high quality information evenings around core subjects, for example the 'Spotlight on reading' evening. Accompanying booklets are prepared for these sessions, for example the excellent 'Reading with your child booklet', and parents find these invaluable.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has satisfactory procedures in place for handling complaints. The school's complaints policy is in line with the current regulations and is available to parents. The school has had no formal complaints since opening.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- extend the systems for assessing children's progress, including the use of information from ongoing observations
- ensure that activities presented are appropriate for all and that work is not too difficult or introduced too early
- specify in further detail the curricula for music and citizenship.

School details

Name of school	Colston Bassett School
DCSF number	891/6031
Unique reference number	135366
Type of school	Primary school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	10 September 2007
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 4 Girls: 1 Total: 5
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0 Girls: 0 Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,925
Address of school	School Lane Colston Bassett Nottinghamshire NG12 3FD
Telephone number	01949 81118
Email address	info@colstonbassett school.com
Headteacher	Mrs J Wilson
Proprietor	Mrs D Miller
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI
Dates of inspection	11 June 2008