

Kestrels' Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120103
Local authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	379952
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Matts
Headteacher	Jo Higgins
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geof Timms

Additional inspector

Jan Connor

Additional inspector

Christopher Christofides

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 25 lessons, taught by 17 teachers. They observed over 11 hours of teaching. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies, planning documents and the school's self-evaluation. Seventy-one questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and 18 different languages are spoken in the school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The school meets current government floor standards. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and is a Reading Recovery school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Many children start school with skills below the levels expected nationally, particularly in English. They make good progress throughout the school, especially in mathematics and reading, although it is less consistent between classes in Key Stage 2. Attainment in mathematics and reading is above average by the end of Year 6, and although pupils' speaking and writing skills are less well developed they are still broadly average.
- Pupils' good progress is due to typically good teaching and strong relationships between adults and pupils. Where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not help pupils understand how they can improve well enough and their questioning does not promote enough independent thinking. Teachers gather a great deal of detailed assessment information but do not always use it fully effectively to accelerate learning.
- Good leadership ensures that issues are identified quickly and good plans address any underachievement by individuals or groups of pupils. Assessment data are analysed in depth by senior and middle leaders, and as a result an effective range of interventions help pupils who are finding learning difficult or who are at an early stage of learning English.
- Parents and carers are wholeheartedly positive, especially about the quality of teaching and learning, and how well their children are kept safe. A small minority had concerns about some pupils' behaviour, but any incidents are dealt with well and the vast majority of pupils' behaviour is good and supports their learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve pupils' skills in speaking and writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills
 - giving pupils more time for writing at length in different subjects.

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- Make more teaching good or outstanding, especially in Key Stage 2, by ensuring teachers:
 - use assessment data consistently well to ensure work is challenging, create better targets for pupils' learning and help them to understand how they can be achieved
 - ask more open and complex questions to extend and improve pupils' understanding.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The pupils' achievement in lessons observed during the inspection, and reflected in the examples of their work scrutinised, was typically good. Most children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in developing their personal, social and emotional skills and in linking letters and sounds, and are well prepared for their future learning. In Key Stage 1 progress is good, especially in mathematics and reading. Attainment in mathematics is above average and in reading it is average. Pupils have a good ability to read unknown words and clearly enjoy reading. Their speaking skills are less well developed and this has a negative impact on their writing, because their vocabulary is less well developed. Because of this, writing attainment is below average and progress slower. In Key Stage 2, progress is good overall but inconsistent due to differences in the teachers' experience and knowledge. Even so, reading skills continue to improve to above average levels, and the oldest pupils enjoy and are keen to talk about the books they are reading. The interventions for disabled pupils, those with special educational need and those for pupils at an early stage of learning English, are clearly successful. These pupils retain a good enthusiasm for reading and develop good skills in attacking words with which they are unfamiliar. This was evident, for example, in one group led by an Arabic-speaking teaching assistant.

Parents and carers are rightly positive about their children's learning, and pupils themselves say that the school helps them learn new things. At times, the achievement of older girls, in test results and in lessons, is affected by their lack of involvement in, and attitudes towards, learning. The school is aware that this sometimes happens and works hard to ensure all pupils, including the girls and the range of minority ethnic groups, make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Pupils say teachers help them learn and they 'make lessons fun.' Parents and carers say the quality of teaching at the school is its major strength, and inspectors judged it to be good overall. The wide range of activities teachers provide support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Good work on appreciating art in Year 6, for example, enabled pupils to show a strong level of empathy with the

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characters in a Picasso painting.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Their subject knowledge is often good and reflects high levels of preparation for lessons, supported by a strong curriculum framework. The interactive whiteboards are used effectively in most lessons across the school. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children, including those who speak very little English, settle quickly and confidently into school routines. Activities indoors and outside provide an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Staff continually observe and assess progress, and use the results well to plan the next steps for children's learning. Teaching throughout the rest of the school is typically good, although a number of lessons remain satisfactory.

Where the teaching is most effective, planning is clear and involves the other adults well to provide support for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. In many of the good lessons observed the pace was quick and this kept all pupils interested and focused. Grouping by ability was used flexibly and this enabled teachers to provide work that was well matched to pupils' prior attainment.

Where the teaching is less effective this is often down to teachers' limited but improving experience and knowledge. A good range of assessment information is available to teachers. For example, a good system for the tracking of specific pupils highlights the progress they make and what the next steps should be. The teaching of intervention groups is often good and this is reflected in the progress these children make. However, teachers do not always use their assessments to plan sufficiently challenging activities for all groups. At times, the learning objectives are not made clear enough for pupils to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, the questions teachers ask are too closed so they do not give enough opportunities for independence, open-ended problem solving or to develop skills such as inference.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and this is typical over time. They are polite and friendly to those they know and respectful towards visitors. Their good behaviour in lessons helps their learning and they enjoy challenges. In the Early Years Foundation Stage a strong focus on routines, a structured day and opportunities to learn and play together in the Nursery and the Reception classes help develop good learning skills and attitudes in children in preparation for Year 1. The different minority ethnic backgrounds are recognised and celebrated alongside a clear focus on improving English so children can learn better in the future. The school is a very harmonious society. There are very few racist incidents and if they do occur they are dealt with appropriately.

The school has worked very hard to improve attendance. This has risen consistently to its currently average levels as a result of dealing firmly with a number of persistent absentees and their families, using support from local authority welfare

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officers and the police.

The school keeps good records regarding behaviour, bullying and other incidents. Bullying of any kind is rare, but pupils say it is dealt with very effectively when it does occur and they talk about the confidence they have in adults to deal with such issues. A number of pupils have behavioural and emotional difficulties and the school deals with them very effectively. Exclusions are rare but used appropriately and correctly when required. Firm efforts are made to ensure all pupils are safe and able to learn effectively. Training for staff in child protection is appropriate. Staff ensure pupils are aware of the dangers of computer misuse and cyber-bullying. Almost all parents and carers say their children feel safe at school, as do the pupils themselves.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has developed effective systems for evaluating and planning the work of the school. One result of this is that all members of staff say they are proud to be at the school, which is a harmonious and pleasant place in which to work and play, and where discrimination of any sort is tackled effectively. The school has had a high proportion of staff changes recently, but effective systems for staff training and development have ensured that they have settled in quickly and are gradually improving their practice. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and honest. For example, the interpretation of test data is very detailed and used to highlight areas where underachievement may occur. Leadership is devolved well to middle leaders and subject leaders, who have a good understanding of ways the school can improve further. For example, changes to the curriculum have been recently made to make it more appropriate and relevant to the pupils. This is already proving effective in helping pupils make links between subjects and use their skills in different ways.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well, including the promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A strong focus on social and moral issues enables the diverse school community to work and play together harmoniously. In addition, good provision for cultural development celebrates diversity and a range of artistic and musical experiences. Provision for numeracy is a particular strength and recent changes to the way literacy is taught have improved pupils' reading skills, but have not yet had a full impact on attainment in writing. Writing skills are practised across the curriculum, but some opportunities to do so are missed. Strong and decisive leadership has resulted in attendance improving rapidly. This emphasises how well the school promotes equal opportunities by making sure all parents and carers are aware of the importance of full attendance. Successful actions such as these show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It receives good reports from the headteacher and has lengthy sessions at which a range of achievement data is shared and explained. Its members have an annual meeting with subject leaders as part of their monitoring process.

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They share ideas, new developments and the results of any changes to the curriculum, and a good proportion visit the school during the day to gain first-hand information about provision and performance. In addition, the variety of expertise on the governing body is used well. It ensures that safeguarding arrangements fully meet current government requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kestrels' Field Primary School, Leicester, LE5 1TG

Thank you for the way you welcomed the inspectors to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit, reading your questionnaires and talking with many of you about your school. We especially enjoyed seeing your good behaviour and how much your attendance has improved. You clearly enjoy your learning.

Kestrels' Field is a good school. We are sure that it will continue to improve in the future because you are all working hard together to make it successful. This is especially evident in mathematics, which you do really well. Also reading is much improved and we saw how well you are able to link letters and sounds to become good readers who really enjoy books. You are not always as confident in writing and we have asked the school to help you get better at this by giving you more speaking opportunities and more time to write longer pieces of writing in different subjects. Nearly all of you, right from the youngest children in the Nursery, make good progress. We have asked the teachers to make sure they use the information they have about your progress to make sure your work is always hard enough and make targets clearer for you, so you understand what you need to do to improve. We have also asked them to think carefully about the questions they ask you in lessons, so that you are able to develop your thinking skills further.

The headteacher, governing body and senior teachers provide good leadership. Your teachers work very hard to give you good and interesting lessons. You help by behaving well and having positive attitudes towards your work. You are learning your basic skills well and this is helping you to be ready for secondary school and your future lives. Try and make sure you keep on attending regularly so that your learning is not disrupted. Thank you again for your friendliness and help. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Kestrels' Field and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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