

King Athelstan Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102579
Local Authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	355213
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Mongredien
Headteacher	Emily Newton
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 13 different teachers and talked to parents and carers, governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked in particular at its self-evaluation and plans for improvement, the data collected on pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered the responses in 99 questionnaires that had been returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The effectiveness of measures to raise attainment, particularly in English, at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The quality of the teaching and the extent to which it challenges pupils to do their best.
- The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The effectiveness of measures taken to improve attendance, especially of persistent absentees.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than usual. Two thirds of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Over half of pupils speak English as an additional language, although few are at an early stage of development in this. An average proportion of pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties form the largest group. More pupils leave and arrive part way through the year than is usual. The school runs a breakfast club, which the governing body manages. ♦ An external provider manages the after-school club; as such this is not part of this inspection. The school houses and manages the Kingston Town Children's Centre, which is also subject to a separate inspection.

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: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching, pupils' attainment in English, particularly in writing, and the consistency of marking.

This is a happy and cohesive school, popular with parents and carers. One commented, 'I have been impressed by the welcoming and friendly atmosphere.' Parents and carers who spoke to inspectors commented that they value the diverse intake. Pupils feel safe at the school. They are aware of the importance of leading healthy lives.

Pupils enter the school with capabilities which vary, but overall they are well below average. Year 6 pupils who have stayed at the school throughout their primary career benefit from the continuity and do a little better than those who join late. From their starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress, but their overall attainment is too low and has not showed sufficient improvement over a three year period. Attainment in mathematics has shown some recent improvement, though it remains below average. Pupils' attainment in English is well below average throughout the school. Pupils' writing skills lag behind their reading skills, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop fluency in writing in a range of topics across the curriculum. Pupils' literacy skills do not prepare them adequately for the next stage of schooling and their longer term economic well-being.

Teaching, although satisfactory, lacks challenge in some lessons and too few lessons are good. This is often because assessment information is not being used rigorously enough to help pupils to do better. This is a particular concern in relation to pupils' acquisition of good language skills. High staff absence and relatively high staff turnover, since the last inspection, have impeded their efforts to ensure that all teaching is consistently good.

Leaders, managers and governors know their school well. Their self-evaluation is accurate, and their plans for the future cover the right areas and are focused on raising attainment. For example, they identified areas of weakness in the management and teaching of mathematics. As a result, they have put in place measures which have made an impact on pupils' attainment in mathematics throughout the school. Stronger leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has resulted in more consistent teaching and learning, which is preparing the youngest children for higher attainment in the future. As a result of sustained effort by leaders, working closely with the education welfare officer, attendance has been rising and is now at average levels. Focused support for individual families has resulted in a drop in the proportion of persistent absentees. Improving the consistency and quality of teaching has been a major focus for leaders and managers. They observe

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lessons frequently and provide valuable guidance to teachers about how to challenge all pupils to achieve their best. Taking all of the above points into account, the school's demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in English, particularly in writing, throughout the school, by:
 - strengthening the subject management of English to ensure that subject leaders understand and use all available guidance to raise attainment
 - ensuring that pupils have as many opportunities as possible to practise fluency in writing in a range of subjects.
- Ensure that all teaching and learning are good or better, by:
 - ensuring that the needs of all pupils are consistently met effectively in lessons
 - planning activities that will challenge all pupils to achieve their best.
- Improve the consistency and quality of assessment, especially marking, to ensure that all pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils enjoy their work and usually behave cooperatively in lessons. When lessons are planned well and teaching is effective, they make good progress. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils enjoyed being 'number detectives' and hunting for different ways of adding up, using odd and even numbers. The lesson provided a good level of challenge for pupils of varying capabilities. However, teachers do not always plan lessons to meet pupils' individual needs, and some lessons lack challenge. For example, pupils with moderate learning difficulties sometimes find the tasks too easy or too difficult. Pupils' rate of progress, although satisfactory is often not fast enough to raise their attainment, and learning is not accelerating quickly. Consequently, achievement overall is inadequate. Pupils' attainment in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 is particularly low. However, in mathematics, good subject leadership and focused strategies are leading to better achievement.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those for whom English is not a first language, and those from the wide range of backgrounds represented in the school, all make steady progress. ♦ However, these groups, too, have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Pupils are friendly, confident and polite to visitors. They show a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle by making sensible eating choices and participating in the many sports clubs and activities with great enjoyment. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any worries. They report that there are very few children who are unkind to others, and any small incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, reflecting pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility within the school, for example by

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serving on the school council. The youngest children, too, are involved in school life, for example in designing their new outdoor play areas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons carefully, so that pupils know from the start of the lesson what they are going to learn and at the end have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt. In the best lessons teachers set a brisk pace and use challenging tasks to stimulate pupils to think for themselves. However, teachers do not always use the school's accurate assessment information about pupils' current attainment to match tasks closely to their needs. Sometimes, especially in English, lessons lack challenge. The quality of marking varies from class to class and from subject to subject, and this means that pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing and how to improve.

Pupils enjoy their residential trips to the Isle of Wight and look forward to visiting the National Gallery to learn more about the artists their classes are named after. These trips and visits help to raise pupils' aspirations. The curriculum has a sound focus on numeracy and reading, but not enough is done to develop pupils' fluency in writing. This is because they have too few opportunities to write at length on a variety of topics. In some lessons an over-reliance on worksheets, especially for younger pupils, means that they are not sufficiently challenged or have the opportunity to record their ideas in longer, and more individual, ways.

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The care and support given to pupils are satisfactory, enabling pupils with a range of additional needs to make satisfactory progress in their learning. There are particular strengths in the care of vulnerable children and in support for pupils for whom English is an additional language, enabling them to make progress in line with others. The breakfast club provides an interesting range of activities that ensure the pupils have a settled start to the day. The school works in sound partnership with external agencies to support pupils with a range of needs. Teaching assistants and other adults provide effective support for them in class, in extra group sessions and in one-to-one support, helping them to become independent learners. The parent of one child commented, 'This is a caring and nurturing school'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her deputy have remained focused on school improvement through a period of staff and pupil mobility, and have created a welcoming and cohesive school which is liked by parents and carers. One commented, 'The school is a happy place and I like the way the headteacher is constantly improving the school.' Aply assisted by her deputy, the headteacher has made a number of improvements, and the effectiveness of their ambition and drive for improvement is satisfactory. Leaders, managers and governors understand their school and are focused on raising pupils' attainment. Their strategies are beginning to prove effective but there is still much to do to ensure that pupils have the best possible life chances. At the moment, the school does not offer adequate value for money.

Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, and hold it to account adequately in relation to pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective, and that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They track accurately the progress of   the many ability, language and minority ethnic groups within the school and are responsive in ensuring that they and their families participate in school activities. As a result, they promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination adequately.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. The school ensures that pupils have an adequate understanding of other people's faiths and ways of life, and pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds get on well together.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children, including those who join part way through the year, settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage because home visits are made to familiarise them and their families with the Nursery. These are particularly appreciated by parents and carers, who like the opportunity to form a relationship with the adult who will be their child's key person for daily contact. The children enter the Nursery with skills and aptitudes which are varied but generally well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave Reception, all have made satisfactory progress in acquiring new skills. The children are happy and confident, and usually get on well with one another. The children are safe and well cared for.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best activities, adults develop children's interest through questioning to promote higher-level thinking. In one activity, for example, based round the theme of the planets, children were absorbed in 'moon writing' on aluminium foil, and developed their number skills by trying to land the right number of 'moon bugs' onto numbered plates. They enjoyed using language involving concepts such as 'how many', and 'higher than'. Occasionally, however, adults do not extend the children's speaking through sufficiently well-targeted questioning, and this inhibits faster progress and better overall achievement in their learning. The children's number skills have improved in recent years, but their language skills lag behind. The play areas are safe and the children are able to use the school playground imaginatively and safely while the outdoor areas are being rebuilt. Leaders and managers of the Early Years Foundation Stage plan the curriculum and manage the provision satisfactorily. School data shows that the outcomes for the children have improved since the recent appointment of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator. At the end of the Reception year, effective transition arrangements enable the children to move confidently into Year 1.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just under one third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Almost all the parents and carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are happy with the school. All agreed that the school is well led and managed. Most agreed that their children enjoy school and that it helps them to lead a healthy life. Inspectors agree with these views. A few felt that their children are not making enough progress. Inspectors agree that learning though satisfactory overall, needs to be faster to enable them to have suitable academic skills for their future lives. Overall, most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school. One commented, 'I love the fact that this school has a real heart that embraces every single pupil and genuinely embraces diversity.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Athelstan Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 328 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	65	34	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	61	38	38	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	53	41	41	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	44	46	46	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	52	45	45	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	55	38	38	3	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	46	48	48	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	39	45	45	4	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	39	50	51	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	30	58	59	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	32	55	56	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	47	49	49	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	60	36	36	1	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



20 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of King Athelstan Primary School, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 3AR

Do you remember when three visitors came to your school recently to watch you learn and play? Thank you for making us so welcome, and telling us your views. This is what we found.

You and your parents and carers told us how much you like your school. We agree that this is a happy community school. However, we want you all to do much better, particularly in writing, than you do at the moment. We would also like you to make faster progress in all your learning. We have therefore given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that your school will be visited again before too long to find out how well you are doing. So don't forget to work as hard as you can!

It was lovely to see how polite you are in talking to visitors. Your school keeps you safe, and you have many chances to eat healthily and take exercise. All the adults take care of you, and are kind and fair to you. You told us that you feel safe in school and that you like your teachers. We agree that your teachers want the very best for you. We have asked them to make sure that you are all given work which really challenges you to do your best. We have also asked them to make sure that the marking in all your books shows you how to improve.

We know that some of you find writing quite hard. We have asked those in charge to plan new ways of helping you improve your writing. For example, we want you to practise writing as much as possible in all subjects, not just in English. We are sure that you will soon begin to see a difference. Meanwhile, keep up the improved attendance! Remember, you cannot take advantage of all the opportunities your school gives you if you are not there!

Yours sincerely

Natalia Power

Lead inspector

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