

Kents Hill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110402
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	356732
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Jolly
Headteacher	Linda Coveney
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas. The inspectors observed eight teaching staff while visiting 12 lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, the governing body minutes, arrangements for safeguarding, and pupils' work. Staff questionnaires were also scrutinised, along with 77 completed by parents and carers.

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

- The progress made by pupils in writing, particularly that of the more able.
- Differences in the progress made between boys and girls in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment information when planning lessons.

Information about the school

Kents Hill is an average size infant and nursery school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds, a few of whom are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below that seen nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

The school has Healthy School status, Quality Mark and has gained the Activemark award. The headteacher commenced in September 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Kents Hill School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress from their starting point. Throughout the rest of the school, they make satisfactory progress, leaving with levels of attainment that are broadly average. Progress is improving however, but the school has rightly identified that more-able pupils do not always progress as quickly as they should in their writing. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, the result of effective support and guidance. Those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are also provided with effective support enabling them to progress well and take a full part in all aspects of school life.

Although most pupils attend regularly, the school's attendance rates are affected by a small number of families who take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Pupils feel safe in school and quickly settle to school routines. The calm and harmonious atmosphere is aided by the pupils' good behaviour both in lessons and during break times. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Support from a local bank provides older pupils with skills to operate as cashiers for the school's own bank. Their good levels of independence, strong social skills and the contribution they make to the school and local community prepare pupils well for the next stage of education.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils who respond well to their high expectations of behaviour and try to do their best. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly. However, not all make consistently good use of this information to pitch the work at the correct level for all groups of pupils. Learning objectives are not consistently closely linked to the assessment information and are not written in language that the pupils can easily understand. The good, creative curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of visits, visitors and clubs. Fitness activities provided by members of a local football club and the school's focus on healthy eating contribute well to the pupils' outstanding healthy lifestyles. The school's rapid diagnosis and arrangements for extra care where it is needed contribute most effectively to the support for those pupils and families who need it. There are very effective links with outside partners that help ensure this good level of care.

The school leaders and managers, well supported by the governing body, demonstrate driving ambition and the skills to improve the quality of education. The school's self-evaluation is accurate with a clear picture of what needs to be improved. The leadership has put in place a range of strategies to improve pupils' attainment in mathematics through setting according to pupils' ability. These strategies are already showing impact. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, improvements to assessment procedures are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Improved assessment of pupils' attainment is providing a more accurate picture of their progress. These improvements

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demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. The leadership's planning and evaluation of community cohesions are outstanding. The utilisation of parents from ethnic minorities represented at the school helps significantly pupils at the early stage of learning English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used effectively to plan work that is pitched at the correct level for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring learning objectives are more closely linked to assessment information and written in language that is easily understood by the pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Good progress ensures that attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average overall, although there are still weaknesses in key areas of literacy. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment according to national assessments in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics is average. Observations of learning during lessons confirm pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although in the best lessons they make good progress. There is no discernible difference in the rate of progress made between boys and girls in any subjects. The school is rightly providing pupils with more opportunities to improve their writing skills across the curriculum. However, the school has rightly identified that more-able pupils do not consistently progress as quickly as they should, particularly in their writing. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language progress well because of the intensive, well-targeted support. ♦

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They participate in the daily 'Wake Up and Shake Up' sessions most enthusiastically and really enjoy other fitness sessions. They are proud when they receive a reward for eating healthily and parents and carers support the school's efforts to encourage healthy eating. A good number of pupils either walk or cycle to school. Pupils feel safe in their everyday life and know who speak to should they have a problem.

The school engenders an ethos of pupils volunteering, both in school and in the local community. For example, pupils sing for local people and at community events. They demonstrate a good awareness of the different customs and traditions in this country and further afield. Their cultural understanding is well developed through opportunities in music and art. Pupils' good behaviour and warm relationships are testament to their good moral and social development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Most lessons are well planned and ensure the interest of pupils. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to provide visual stimuli; for example, Year 2 teachers used them to emphasise the similarities and differences between life in Tanzania and this country. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they respond well. Teachers clearly plan work for pupils of different abilities. However, they are not all sufficiently consistent in ensuring the wealth of information they glean from assessing pupils is used accurately to match the work to pupils in their class. Work is marked regularly and consistently and learning objectives are shared with the pupils, although, too often, they are in language not easily understood by the pupils. A particular strength is the effective use of teaching assistants who contribute well to the learning of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The 'diaries' of learning by these pupils are worthy of note, demonstrating a clear picture of the satisfactory progress they make.

The curriculum has good breadth and balance and the school is establishing links with a school in Ghana, to improve further the pupils' good awareness of other cultures and religions. Music has a high profile with a quarter of the Year 2 pupils learning to play a musical instrument. Links with other schools enhance the learning opportunities. The school does all it can to raise attendance levels and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers support the school in ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually.

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The popular breakfast and afternoon clubs provide effective supervision and good learning opportunities for pupils. These are extended to children who attend the Nursery and for those who are cared for throughout lunchtimes, and additional morning and afternoon sessions. ♦♦♦

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In the short time she has been at the school, the headteacher has quickly identified areas in need of improvement and introduced effective strategies to raise the quality of education. For example, additional targeted intervention support by teachers is effectively filling gaps in their learning. The headteacher's driving ambition is shared by senior leaders and other staff. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and the leadership has addressed effectively some weaknesses. Teachers are being provided with guidance and coaching that is beginning to improve the quality of teaching. The governing body analyses data effectively, holds the leadership to account and supports it effectively in the drive for improvement. The governing body ensures safeguarding procedures are fully in place and that all policies are robustly and regularly monitored and evaluated. It ensures the site is safe and that governors, staff and helpers are thoroughly vetted and receive the appropriate training in safeguarding.

There are good relationships with parents and carers with almost all who responded to the parent questionnaire expressing great satisfaction with the school. Parents and carers are satisfied that they can discuss any concerns or issues with staff and the school canvasses their opinions through surveys. Parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very pleased with the support their children receive. The excellent involvement of parents from ethnic minorities plays a major part in ensuring their children settle and learn well. The school's excellent community cohesion plan capitalises on this local awareness. The school is making excellent use of the local community to support learning. Parents from minority ethnic backgrounds support pupils at an early stage of learning English through translating books and materials and by interpreting when they give in-class support. As part of its extended services, the school provides courses for parents learning English. ♦ All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and take part in all activities the school offers. Good links with the local church, schools within the cluster and businesses enhance pupils' learning effectively.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children enter the Nursery, their skills and abilities are much lower than expected for their age. They make good progress and their broadly average attainment on entry to Year 1 represents good achievement. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language also make good progress, the result of very well targeted support and guidance. There are still weaknesses in key areas of communication, language and literacy, but the school has introduced a range of activities to accelerate learning in these areas and work is beginning to show results.

Children settle quickly, thoroughly enjoy learning, and rapidly become independent learners. The learning environment is rich and vibrant and the outside areas are used effectively to extend learning that takes place inside the classroom. For example, during the inspection, children from both Nursery and Reception classes were outside making music from different materials, developing their counting skills and being provided with opportunities to develop their speaking skills.

The children's key workers know them very well, planning daily with each child what activities they will undertake. Detailed assessments are undertaken regularly and help to build up a learning portfolio for each child. These observations and records help check the needs of those who may face difficulties. The analysis of data and planning has helped to establish a coherent curriculum and improved progress. This has resulted in more intensive programmes to improve children's understanding of letter sounds. Well-trained and qualified staff plan and deliver interesting sessions that blend opportunities for teacher-led and child-initiated indoor and outdoor activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, with teachers sharing responsibilities. Adults ensure good progress and that the environment is safe and secure. Links with parents and

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carers are well managed, with regular meetings for them to learn about the curriculum and to see and discuss their children's work.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents returning the parent questionnaire indicated their children enjoyed school and were kept safe. Most were happy with other aspects of the school. A very small minority expressed concerns regarding the progress made by their children and inspectors identified that not all pupils made the progress of which they are capable. A few parents and carers also expressed concerns regarding information the school provides for them on how well their children are progressing. Inspectors found parents and carers were kept well informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kents Hill 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	69	24	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	78	17	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	45	34	44	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	47	33	43	7	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	51	32	42	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	51	33	43	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	55	33	43	1	1	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)	36	47	30	39	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	49	31	40	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	43	36	47	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	48	30	39	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	43	56	29	38	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	68	20	26	3	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



14 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kents Hill School, Milton Keynes MK7 6HD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and are pleased that you enjoy coming to school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You behave well, get on with your work in lessons, and help and care for each other. You sang really well in assembly. You feel safe and work very hard to keep healthy. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are given a good start to their schooling. You are provided with many interesting things to do and the adults at the school look after you well.

We have asked those in charge of the school to do the following to make it better:

- help teachers to make better use of information about how well you learn to progress a little quicker, make work a little more difficult for you, and

◆◆◆◆◆◆ make sure you understand what it is you are going to learn in lessons.

All of you can help by telling you teacher if you think the work is too easy for you.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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