

Katherines Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115245
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357718
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graeme Dykes
Headteacher	Suzanne Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2007
School address	Brookside Harlow CM19 5NJ
Telephone number	01279 421495
Fax number	01279 416042
Email address	admin@katherines.essex.sch.uk

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St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited two assemblies and 16 lessons, observing 10 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 105 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively is the school addressing the issue of raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress in writing and mathematics?
- Do pupils know and understand how to achieve their targets?
- Are middle leaders and subject co-ordinators making an effective contribution to the development of the school?

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.

A small minority are from other minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of African heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few are at the early stages of learning to communicate in English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average but the proportion of pupils holding a statement of special educational needs is above average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The school holds Healthy School status and the Sports Active Mark award.

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****3**

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Its strengths are in the good level of care, the welcoming approach and the strong relationships between staff and pupils. The large majority of parents and carers strongly agreed that they were happy with their child's experiences at school. One wrote 'My children have become more confident and independent since starting Katherines. The staff are all very approachable and friendly'. Others wrote in a similar vein. Pupils are positive about school, developing their social skills well and enjoying opportunities to work together and to take responsibility. They respect each other, get on together and behave well. This contributes much to their personal development.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is consistently similar to the national average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils' progress in different year groups and classes is variable but by the end of Year 6 it is satisfactory. Pupils' skills in reading are generally better than those in writing. The school is focusing successfully on improving pupils' skills in writing and in particular targeting boys' writing. However, there is still more to be done to ensure that standards in writing are consolidated. Standards in mathematics slipped slightly in the last two years but remain within the average banding. The slippage can be attributed to the emphasis placed on developing pupils' writing skills.

Within an overall profile of satisfactory teaching there is some that is good on which the school can build. All teachers have strengths, but these are not evident in every lesson. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress overtime. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are challenged and learning proceeds at a quick pace. Where lessons are not as effective, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan work that challenges and encourages pupils, particularly those who are more able, to aim higher. Targets are set in literacy and numeracy but often pupils are uncertain how to achieve them, especially in mathematics. This is because marking does not consistently provide pupils with sufficient guidance. The curriculum makes a noticeable contribution to their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and the vast majority adopt a healthy lifestyle. This has contributed to the school gaining Healthy School status and the Sports Active Mark award. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but opportunities to consolidate pupils' basic skills in other lessons are sometimes missed. In some classes the work is not always presented in an imaginative way that captures the interest of the pupils and accelerates their learning.

The headteacher provides firm leadership and is respected by staff, parents and carers and pupils. One of the older pupils said 'I like Mrs Ryan, she is strict but you know where you stand with her'. The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths

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and areas for development and is clear about the direction the school should take. Priorities are clearly identified in the detailed school improvement plan. Following the recent departure of the deputy headteacher and a senior teacher, the newly appointed middle managers and subject leaders are developing their roles well. However, they have yet to fully contribute to the development of the school for example, in analysing assessment data, comparing the outcomes against national results and in assessing the impact of teaching on learning. The governing body is supportive and places considerable emphasis on ensuring the care and well being of the pupils. On the basis that the school has correctly identified the key area for development, put into place strategies to bring about improvements and the school's record of pupils making satisfactory progress, the overall capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school by:
 - making more effective use of assessment information to set work and challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
 - providing pupils with clearer and more consistent guidance on how to improve their work.
- Enhance the effectiveness of middle managers and subject co-ordinators by:
 - reviewing their roles and increasing their responsibility for promoting school improvement
 - improving their skills in analysing and using assessment information and in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning.
- Ensure the curriculum consistently offers pupils imaginative and memorable experiences which provide opportunities for learning and improve their skills in English and mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected. They respond well to their teachers and to tasks which require independent work. For example, in a Year 5/6 class pupils worked with sustained concentration to identify as many lines of symmetry as they could find in different two dimensional shapes. They observed carefully and used mathematical terminology appropriately as they discussed their findings with each other. In English, pupils speaking and listening skills are promoted well. In most lessons teachers ask pupils to discuss points with a 'talk partner'. Their reading development is enhanced through the good links with parents and carers and the regular use of home/school reading diaries. Pupils are responding well to strategies to improve writing and this is beginning to impact. Standards are rising. However, there is much still to be accomplished, especially in Years 1 and 2 where many pupils have not fully acquired the expected skills in spelling and punctuation. Their use of adventurous vocabulary is often limited.

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Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who find school challenging, make similar progress to their peers. Staff monitor their progress closely and place the emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills. Overall, girls tend to attain higher standards and make better progress than boys. Strategies have been put in place to close the gap. By the end of Year 6, the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is an additional language generally make satisfactory progress and reach higher standards than their respective groups nationally.

Pupils are increasingly enjoying school. Attendance is improving. Pupils feel safe. They are aware of safety issues and understand the importance of e-safety. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, undertake tasks around the school and become members of the school council. They raise funds for national and international charities and take part in local events. Most pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their knowledge of other faiths, cultures, religions and beliefs is generally under-developed. Pupils' average attainment and their good social skills provide them with a secure basis for the next stage in their education.

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	2
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	3
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?

Teaching has a number of good features. For example, the use of praise, sharing ideas with a 'talk partner' and the use of interactive whiteboards to support learning. In the better lessons effective questioning techniques consolidate and promote pupils'

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understanding. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and teachers reinforce subject specific terminology well. In all lessons teachers make clear the purpose of the lesson but do not always establish their expectations of pupils with different abilities. In most lessons there is a reasonable balance between the contributions of teachers and pupils. However, activities are not always sufficiently open-ended and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Marking is undertaken regularly and effective use is made of praise. Whilst there are some good examples of developmental comments, especially in the English books, it is not consistent and comments are not followed up as a matter of routine. Some teachers are more skilled than others at making sure that pupils reflect on the success of their learning at the end of the lessons.

Good links and partnerships with other schools and organisations and a good range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors, support pupils' personal development well. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and adequately matched to their needs. However, opportunities to consolidate, refine and extend pupils' basic skills in literacy and particularly in numeracy in other lessons have not been fully exploited. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support pupils' learning. Most subjects are taught separately but occasionally week or theme days enhance the curriculum. Art displays around the school reflect high quality work. Singing is taught well, as heard in assemblies.

The good level of care contributes significantly to all pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils feel safe and know they can turn to adults for assistance. Systems and structures to ensure pupils' well-being and safety are well established. Procedures are followed by all staff. Staff, and particularly the very effective inclusion manager, work closely with parents and carers and with a range of agencies to support individual pupils to ensure that their needs are met. Induction and transition arrangements are securely embedded in the work of the 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	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and middle leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide satisfactory drive for the school's development. Staff work together well. There is a shared understanding of the next steps to take the school forward. Recently appointed middle leaders are developing their roles but have yet to have their responsibilities reviewed. The headteacher undertakes detailed analysis of assessment information. She has recently involved staff in this process and they are increasingly accountable for pupils'

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progress. Links with parents and carers are good. Regular newsletters are well presented and informative. Parent and carers views are welcomed.

The governing body ensures that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust and that procedures to keep pupils safe are established in school routines. Risk assessments are detailed and maintained meticulously. However, the governing body does not provide sufficient challenge to the leadership team. This is because the governing body does not rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's performance against external measures or ask sufficiently penetrating questions. Equality of opportunities is monitored adequately and any suggestion of discrimination investigated. The school is working to ensure that there is no difference in performance between groups of pupils. Gaps are closing but differences between boys and girls have yet to be eliminated. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. Within the school and the local area it is good but links both nationally and internationally have not been established. As a result, pupils' awareness of other cultures, beyond those represented in the local community, is underdeveloped.

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	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	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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for the age. They settle quickly, grow in confidence and develop a positive attitude to school. They enjoy working, playing and exploring the indoor and outdoor spaces. The classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment in which children can develop their independence. The secure outdoor area provides good opportunities for children to develop their social and physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, its potential for promoting their creative development and literacy and numeracy skills is underdeveloped.

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Planning in the Nursery and the Reception classes ensures that all areas of children's learning are covered. Staff place considerable emphasis on developing the children's ability to communicate and to work together. Children follow instructions and develop their social skills well. Daily well organised snack time ensures they quickly understand the importance of personal hygiene and healthy living.

The Early Years Foundation team have a reasonable understanding of the strengths and areas for development; these are identified in the development plan. Induction procedures are good and relationships with parents and carers are quickly established. Recent changes in staffing in the Nursery have led to a better balance between activities led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
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

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers was similar to most primary schools. Most respondents were entirely supportive of the school. Almost all agree that the school keeps their children safe. A very small minority considered that the school does not help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors judged that links between the school and with parents and carers are good. The school welcomes their involvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Katherines 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 301 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	60	40	38	0	0	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	71	58	32	30	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	60	57	45	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	62	36	34	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	61	40	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	54	43	41	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	51	49	47	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)	48	46	51	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	50	48	46	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	57	42	40	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	49	52	50	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	57	43	41	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	64	36	34	1	1	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Katherines Primary School Harlow CM19 5NJ.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you well. You know that you can turn to them if you have any worries. We agree with you that the staff look after you well. The level of care they provide is good. We were also pleased to find that you have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. We saw that you behave well and show respect for each other. You make a good contribution to the school and the local community. Your attendance rate is similar to the national average for primary schools.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You get off to a sound start in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception and continue to make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics as you move through the school. The standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are similar to the national average. We listened carefully to you when you said that the work is sometimes too easy or that you were uncertain what you had to do to reach your targets.

So, we have asked the school to do the following things to help you reach higher standards and make quicker progress especially in mathematics and in writing:

- to make more use of their assessment information to set work that challenges all of you and to make certain that when teachers mark your work they give you clear advice how to reach your maths and literacy targets
- to look more closely at how the middle managers and subject leaders are undertaking their roles and getting them to check on the progress you are making
- to ensure that teachers plan lessons that are exciting and to find more opportunities to practice your mathematical and writing skills in other lessons.

Please remember, to make your school better you must play your part by always trying your best.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones
Lead inspector

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