

Knypersley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124060
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380790
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Shelley
Headteacher	Abigail Rourke
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 26 lessons taught by eleven teachers. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies and procedures. Inspectors also analysed the responses to questionnaires for pupils and staff, and 130 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- What evidence does the school have to support its assertions that progress is now good throughout the school, and is the quality of teaching good enough to sustain this improvement?
- Are all leaders and managers equally well focused on ensuring progression in skills in their subjects?

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average sized school. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The headteacher took up her post in September 2010. The school shares its site with two external providers who run before- and after-school clubs and additional early years provision, all of which are inspected separately.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The headteacher's relentless drive for improvement has inspired all staff to work together to ensure pupils make at least good progress. Staff morale is high. Those with management responsibilities lead their subjects well. They are firmly focused on ensuring key skills are developed in each subject, and that literacy and numeracy skills are given due attention wherever possible. As a result, pupils achieve well, and learning and progress are good throughout the school; this is evident in their work and in data tracking their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as all other pupils. This is because teaching is never less than good, and is sometimes outstanding and teachers give careful attention to each pupil's progress. In a small number of lessons, more-able pupils are not always moved on quickly enough to more challenging work prepared for them. The governing body discharges its duties effectively, although it has more to do to ensure it challenges the school in relation to academic outcomes. The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate and well-founded, the school's improvement plan provides a clear way forward, and issues identified at the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. All of this evidence demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Children start school in the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age. They learn and develop well, and start Year 1 securely at the level expected. In 2011, test results rose to significantly above average in Year 2. Teaching in Year 3 is building on this improvement successfully. The majority of pupils in Year 4 are already working at levels above those expected for their age. They are on track to be well above by the end of this year. The quality of their writing is particularly impressive, and they readily use paragraphs and a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical conventions to engage the reader. The curriculum is extremely successful in meeting the varied needs of pupils who have particular interests and talents, as well as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The warm, good-humoured relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that behaviour is good and pupils enjoy learning. Pupils very much appreciate the interactions with staff that augment marking and help them understand how to improve their work. Their learning is constantly assessed and adjusted in lessons in response to their different rates of progress. They are also strongly encouraged to 'use what you already know to help you find out what you don't know'. They follow this maxim well.

The school is extremely vigilant in its care for all pupils, including those with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Pupils and their parents and carers greatly appreciate the high levels of support and guidance they and their children receive. All of those, who responded to the pupil questionnaire, said that adults care for them. This was echoed in discussions with them and their parents and carers. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy; and attendance and punctuality are good. This and their good basic skills ensure they leave the school well prepared for their future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more-able pupils are fully challenged in all lessons by moving them quickly onto more challenging work.
- Extend the role of the governing body further in monitoring academic outcomes by building on the good start made in literacy and special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is the result of prompt and detailed attention paid to their individual needs, and the often excellent support they receive from teaching and support staff. Pupils write confidently. They use a wide range of vocabulary and different writing styles to suit different audiences and purposes. Daily phonics sessions add to their good reading and spelling skills, and punctuation and grammar skills are well developed. Pupils show a good understanding of what they read. For example: as Year 4 pupils transferred information from a witness statement into a newspaper report, the majority were able to distinguish between the important facts and those that were peripheral to investigating a fictional museum robbery.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to solve multi-step mathematical problems. They demonstrated this clearly as they highlighted different quantities in the written text to show whether they would use addition or subtraction at each stage. Some more-able pupils solved more complex problems by also using multiplication and division. However, not all high achievers were moved on to this more challenging learning quickly enough in all lessons. Pupils explain clearly how teachers' marking helps them to succeed because it relates to learning objectives for the lesson, and to their individual targets. They assess their own learning well, identifying for the teacher, areas in which they need further help. Pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well in different subjects. They prepare slide presentations using skills beyond those expected for their age

Pupils make healthy eating choices and are very knowledgeable about good and bad foods, and understand the need for regular exercise to keep themselves healthy. Large numbers participate wholeheartedly in the many sports activities available to

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them, and thoroughly enjoy swimming in their pool. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They contribute to its improvement, and relish in opportunities to take responsibilities, for example, as school councillors, play leaders, and energy angels. They also contribute to the wider community, show initiative in raising money for different charities, and are well regarded for their behaviour and attitudes outside of school. They know that actions have consequences. They learn to resolve conflict amicably and fairly, and to realise the importance of discussion in doing so. They feel extremely safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Pupils value and trust the adults with whom they work. They say adults always listen to them, and deal swiftly and effectively with bullying or any other form of harassment. Parents and carers agree with this and report that staff always have time for them too. Pupils are reflective and caring. They develop a good understanding of their own place in the world, and of different faiths and cultures at home and abroad. Their attendance is above average.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and improving rapidly, and several outstanding lessons were observed. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils made great strides in learning to use and explain different methods of calculation, and in a Year 1 English lesson they gained a really good understanding of how to use ‘bossy’ words when writing instructions. They were all equally challenged by their work; teachers had high expectations and pupils worked hard to meet them. Teachers’ precise and detailed planning is rigorously evaluated. This ensures pupils’ learning improves step-by-step, as does the guidance provided in the exceedingly well planned curriculum. In lessons, learning is extended further by teachers’ skilled questioning, and the many opportunities for pupils to discuss and clarify their thoughts with a partner.

Pupils report that changes introduced last year to make lessons more interesting, relevant and creative have made the curriculum much more enjoyable. The school places a strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills; this is accompanied by a comprehensive programme of personal social and health education, which is augmented by visiting experts. A wide range of after-school activities and an exceptionally broad programme of visits and visitors, further enhance learning and personal development in all age groups. Older pupils learn French as part of the curriculum, and after-school French and Spanish clubs extend this opportunity to all pupils.

The school has recently been refurbished and provides a warm, safe and welcoming environment in which pupils’ learning is celebrated in attractive displays. Transition for pupils throughout the school and on to the middle school is smooth and highly effective, and there are excellent links with other schools and external agencies. Communication between the school and parents and carers is good. This helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities deal with new situations confidently. Parents and carers report that the school’s welcoming approach greatly allays any of their concerns.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers feel greatly empowered to fulfil their roles and are becoming increasingly effective in doing so. They have very successfully driven improvement by embedding in all staff a strong determination to accelerate pupils’ progress further. The checks, made on teaching and learning, are extremely well focused. Areas for improvement are followed up very rigorously, good practice is shared, and staff readily ask for and receive help from each other. This has been instrumental in raising the quality of teaching to at least good, and increasing the proportion that is outstanding. Staff report that they are proud to be at the school, as do the pupils. Parents and carers recognise and praise the improvements. They very much appreciate the high levels of communication that ensure they know what their children are learning and how well, and they readily support the school by cooperating with it to improve their children’s progress. All of this is having a very positive impact on pupils’ learning and personal development.

Governance is good. Although the governing body has more to do in terms of monitoring academic outcomes, it keeps a close check on pupils’ personal development, on finance, and on health and safety. It uses its expertise well in these areas. The school adopts recommended good practice in relation to safeguarding. All policies and training, including for child protection, are up to date, and the school is beginning to emerge as an example of good practice within the local authority.

This is an inclusive school where equality of opportunity and community cohesion are promoted well. Pupils of all ages, from the least to the most able, have the opportunity to take part in the wide range of activities available to them in and beyond the normal school day. The school works hard to break down stereotypes, and to introduce pupils to different faiths, ethnicities and cultures at home and abroad. Opportunities to do this are built into the curriculum. For example, the current topic, celebrations, has been used well to introduce pupils to different religious festivals, and to cultural celebrations, including carnival.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

This age group is well led and managed, provision is good overall and some elements are outstanding. Good induction procedures ensure that children and their parents and carers quickly settle into well-established routines of school life and are fully involved in their children’s learning. Parents and carers help the school to gain an all-round picture of their children by posting information on the ‘Reach for the Stars’ boards in Nursery and Reception. The curriculum is extremely well planned; staff use information from parents and carers, and that gained from their meticulous assessments of children’s learning, to ensure that children’s different needs and interests are fully met. Excellent attention is paid to the children’s health, safety and welfare. Children gain in confidence and self-esteem, and begin to converse easily with known adults and with each other. Staff successfully encourage them to take turns, listen to each other, and follow instructions.

Teaching is good and focuses well on developing early literacy and numeracy skills; an exciting range of activities, indoors and out, stimulates children’s curiosity about the world around them. For example: during the inspection Nursery children happily experimented with colour filters and began to recognise how colours change when another colour is added, while Reception children engaged in activities involving role play and various writing activities related to their theme of celebrations. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to move children’s learning on rapidly as it occurs, particularly when they carry out independent work. This means that children sometimes struggle to complete tasks that follow whole class sessions because they do not quite understand what they have to do. Overall, however, there is a good balance of activities led by adults and those that children can select for themselves, indoors and out, and they stimulate learning well.

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

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires, and those to whom

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inspectors spoke during the inspection, are virtually unanimous in their praise for the school. Phrases such as 'I am delighted with the school', 'my child loves coming to school', and 'this is a lovely community school' where children are 'in safe hands' and 'make good progress' were typical of the comments inspectors received. A good number of parents and carers also commented positively on leadership and management, and the rapid improvement that has taken place recently. Inspection findings confirm these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Knypersley First 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 345 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	83	21	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	83	21	16	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	106	82	23	18	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	103	79	26	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	108	83	22	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	99	76	30	23	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	76	28	22	3	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)	88	68	33	25	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	92	71	36	28	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	77	59	52	40	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82	63	41	32	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	101	78	27	21	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	107	82	21	16	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



16 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knypersley First School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 6NN

Thank you very much indeed for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking with us about what you do there. You go to a good school where you are extremely well cared, thoroughly enjoy learning, and make good progress. We noted how well you and your parents and carers work together with the staff to ensure your learning improves day by day.

The school's leaders and managers check your work carefully and make sure that staff teach you well. We saw some excellent teaching and learning in your school. It is clear that teachers' marking helps you to understand what you need to do to improve, because you could explain so well how comments relate to your learning objectives and targets. You told us and showed us that you are very proud of your school, that you feel very safe there, and that you have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. We noted your good behaviour in lessons and around the school, and saw how that too helped your learning. We have suggested two things that the school can do to ensure your progress continues to get better. They are:

- to ensure that those of you capable of harder work are given the opportunity to do it sooner in all lessons, and
- to increase the governing body's involvement in checking how well you are doing in your learning.

You can help by continuing to listen carefully to those who teach you and by working hard at all times. We hope that by doing so, you will gain an even greater sense of achievement that will enable you to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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