

Kents Hill School

Birdlip Lane, Milton Keynes, MK7 6HD

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well. Standards have risen and are average by the end of the Reception year.
- In Years 1 and 2, most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is above average in writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in the Nursery and Reception classes. In Years 1 and 2, pupils usually learn well because lessons are generally well thought out to suit all needs and abilities.
- Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Adults manage behaviour well. Pupils, as a result, show a clear understanding of what is expected of them as they work and play.
- The school is well led and managed, including by the governing body. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- The breakfast club and after-school club are well attended and much enjoyed by all. Pupils socialise, work and play in a safe and secure place.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although achievement in Years 1 and 2 has improved it is not yet consistently good for a few pupils. Pupils' progress is not always tracked effectively to ensure that all pupils are doing as well as they should.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have understood what they are learning and their questioning does not always involve enough pupils.
- At times when senior leaders observe lessons there is too little focus on the quality of learning and improvement points are not precise enough.
- The quality of the support given by the teaching assistants is not always effective.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspectors observed 12 teachers whilst observing 13 parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and her staff, pupils, a small number of parents, representatives from the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Whilst observing the work of the school, the inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the on-line Parent View in planning the inspection and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, school improvement planning, and external reviews of the school, documents relating to safeguarding and minutes from governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Nina Bee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kents Hill is smaller than the average-sized school.
- Approximately half of the pupils come from White British backgrounds with the remainder coming from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The headteacher, along with the governors, manage the breakfast and after-school club and the wrap-around care provided for nursery-aged children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to outstanding, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - making sure that teachers constantly check learning during lessons
 - using questioning more effectively so that pupils of all abilities are involved in class discussions
 - tracking pupils' performance more regularly and using the information to ensure that pupils reach their targets in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - checking more thoroughly how well support staff contribute to effective learning
 - making sure that when senior leaders and managers observe lessons they always focus on the quality of learning and are even more specific when recording what needs to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills and abilities well below those usually found. They achieve well, but even so start in Reception with skills and abilities below expectations. By the end of Reception they reach average levels. Achievement is good in all areas of learning.
- In Key Stage 1, most pupils achieve well. A few pupils have made outstanding progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science as they moved through Years 1 and 2. However, a small minority of pupils have not achieved well because their progress has not been checked regularly enough. The school's own data show that pupils achieve well in science.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. They receive good quality support in lessons to improve their language and reading skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. They are supported well in lessons. Those with individual education plans receive very good additional support to enable them to reach their targets. Further support is available, for all pupils, through intervention programmes which particularly support literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve well. Their abilities and needs are effectively catered for during lessons and special programmes are provided to enhance their learning.
- Regular letters and sounds work (phonics) enables pupils to use their knowledge well when they start to sound out words in their reading books. Children in Reception were observed thoroughly enjoying learning initial letter sounds and names. They focused attentively on the activity and showed an eagerness to learn to read. The above-average results in the recent phonic screening test for six-year-olds show that pupils get off to a successful start in reading.
- Older pupils have confidence and obvious enjoyment as they read. Pupils' individual reading records, which go home each day, clearly show that parents are well involved in supporting their children's reading.
- The most recent results show that attainment in writing, at the end of Key Stage 1, has risen since the previous inspection and is now above average because of improvements in how writing is taught. Over the last three years, attainment has steadily improved in reading and mathematics but remains broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery and the Reception classes. Teachers plan exciting and interesting activities that are well resourced. Children quickly become confident at choosing their own activities or working with adults and learn well.
- Evidence of good learning was observed in the Nursery. Children, including a few who were part of the wrap-around care provision, sat in small groups and discussed what they had done during the session. Adults gave individuals the time they needed to think about what they wanted to say. Children had good opportunities to speak and listen to others during this session.
- In Reception, children were seen using scales confidently to weigh fruit and vegetables. They also used scissors, pencils and video cameras with good control. Adults helped children to deepen their understanding. The children thoroughly enjoyed all that was on offer. Parents of children in the Nursery and Reception are pleased with the provision provided and say their children are often disappointed when it is the weekend as they cannot attend school.
- In Years 1 and 2, teaching is not always good. Not all teachers check pupils' understanding as lessons progress and some pupils do not fully understand what they are learning. Similarly, when teachers accept answers from only a few volunteers, the others sometimes lose interest and stop listening.
- In a Year 1 literacy lesson, the work was demanding for everyone as pupils focused on writing a

list of instructions in the correct order. Both the teacher and other adults promoted and extended pupils' writing skills. Through skilful questioning, the teacher checked understanding. Learning was good because pupils were keen to complete the activity so concentrated well.

- The support which is provided by teaching assistants is variable. While there is evidence of good practice, a few do not always give pupils the advice and support they need to learn effectively. Not all have high enough expectations regarding the quality of the written work pupils produce.
- Teachers mark pupils' work well and usually give constructive comments which help them to understand what they need to do to improve and reach their targets.
- Teachers use information and communication technology well to extend learning. Children in the Nursery were astounded when the teacher projected photographs of their models onto the whiteboard. They were then very keen to speak about shapes in their models. Pupils in Year 2 improved their knowledge of letters and sounds as they worked independently on the computers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Behaviour is good in lessons, and when pupils move around the school or play outside. Adults have a consistent approach to managing behaviour and they do this well. No anti-social behaviour was observed during the inspection and although there are clear systems to record poor behaviour there are few recorded incidents.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are respectful and show consideration by holding doors open for adults and each other. Pupils know that their friends in school are from many different backgrounds and say that it is important to be kind towards each other. Pupils know what bullying is and say there is none in this school.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now above average. Pupils of all ages say they enjoy learning and coming to school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults would help them to sort out any problems. They know about potential dangers they may come across and speak sensibly about issues such as the importance of being careful when crossing roads.
- The small minority of parents who responded to the on-line inspection survey generally gave positive responses to questions related to pupils' behaviour and their safety whilst in school.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, her senior staff and governors have continuously focused on raising achievement and attainment and improving attendance. The impact of their work is evident, as teaching is stronger, standards are rising, especially in writing, and attendance is above average.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively and, as a result, provision for pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2, has been improving.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably after being carefully checked by senior leaders and external consultants. More children are reaching the expected levels at the end of Reception. Most pupils are now achieving well as they move through Key Stage 1. However, the most recent observations of teaching do not focus enough on the quality of learning and, as a result, points for further development are not precise enough to ensure that teaching moves from good to outstanding.
- Leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Staff and governors are involved in setting targets for improvement that clearly identify the most important areas for development. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that enough progress is being made.
- The school holds teachers to account for their performance and sets them robust targets linked to pupil progress. The school ensures that pay rises are earned.

- Leaders have not checked the effectiveness of the work of teaching assistants in enough detail, which has meant that provision is not consistently good. Occasionally, the progress of pupils has slowed because the support has not been focused enough on their needs.
 - Pupils say they enjoy going on visits and extra-curricular activities. Staff work hard to ensure that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and that pupils achieve their best in a school which supports the promotion of equal opportunities.
 - The school fosters good relations with parents and the most recent questionnaires sent out by the school show that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. External agencies are used effectively when additional support and advice are needed for pupils and staff.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. This results in good behaviour and pupils showing tolerance towards each other at all times. Pupils begin to learn that life is different in the wider world. Older pupils spoke confidently about the differences between their school and their link school in Ghana.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Minutes from governing body meetings show that governors ask searching questions and are well informed and involved in the work of the school. They show that governors are committed to school improvement and regularly review how well the school is doing. Governors regularly meet with staff to discuss pupils' progress. They have approved the use of the pupil premium funding to buy in extra staff so that senior staff can teach special programmes to pupils who find learning difficult. The governing body takes its safeguarding duties seriously. Procedures are in place to ensure that pupils and staff are safe and secure in school and statutory requirements are fully met. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well run.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110402
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	405283

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
Mixed	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Jolly
Headteacher	Linda Coveney
Date of previous school inspection	12-13 January 2011
Telephone number	01908 240038
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