

Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School

St Davids Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 7QL

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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 school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Due to its history, the school cannot show that pupils' current good progress has been maintained over time in all year groups. However, pupils' progress has accelerated over the last year. They now make good progress in lessons because of good teaching and good leadership.
- Pupils do not all have enough opportunities to write at length.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not always of a good standard.
- Standards in mathematics are still not high enough, in spite of the rapid progress made by pupils last year in all year groups.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is sound, but teachers are not identifying enough opportunities to develop mathematical thinking in other subjects.
- Too many pupils arrive late at school, even though the school is working very hard to encourage them to arrive on time.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the leadership team have driven improvement relentlessly since the last inspection. Together with an equally committed staff team, they have made sure that all aspects of the school have improved.
- Leadership and management, including governance are good. Leaders check the quality of teaching, pupils' work and their rates of progress thoroughly and regularly, and use the resulting information to continually improve pupils' learning and wellbeing.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers are skilled at helping pupils to make the next steps in their learning in lessons, through their marking and through pupils' homework.
- Pupils show confidence in their learning and have a good and improving understanding of how to learn and how to apply their skills in different subjects.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. Pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour are given good support.
- Pupils in the designated provision unit (the DSP) make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, all of which were seen together with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning, and made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff and three governors and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the school’s plans for improvement, data on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring files, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met parents informally at the start of the school day and during the school’s reading afternoon for parents of pupils in Key Stage 1. They took into account the responses to the school’s own parental survey and the 12 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Heather Weston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school has specifically resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This designated provision unit (DSP) caters for 24 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and is managed by the school on behalf of the local authority. All of these pupils have statements of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- When the school was last inspected, in February 2012, it was placed in special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - further developing teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics
 - further promoting pupils' thinking skills in mathematics
 - giving pupils more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Improve progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - all pupils have regular opportunities to write at greater length
 - in all classes, the standard of pupils' presentation, including the quality of handwriting, spelling and grammar, is consistently good or better.
- Ensure that pupils arrive at school on time for the start of the school day.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From starting points which are below average, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. The progress of all groups has accelerated over the last year. Achievement requires improvement as this progress has not been sustained over a sufficiently long period, because there is variation between the standards reached in different subjects and there is some variation between year groups.
- The standards reached by pupils in the main school at the end of Key Stage 1, having been well below average, are now average. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are average, which shows notable improvement from previous low levels. Pupils in all year groups made rapid progress in mathematics last year, but standards in mathematics are still low. This is because of previously severe underachievement which has resulted in gaps in pupils' basic skills.
- Improved progress is due to leaders' concerted drive for improvement. They have inspired staff to improve their practice and pupils to take more responsibility for their learning. Pupils confidently tackle complex problems and are not put off if they make mistakes, as they know that this is an important part of learning.
- Pupils in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 benefit from the systematic approach to teaching the sounds made by letters (phonics) which helps them tackle new words in their reading and improves their ability to spell words accurately.
- Pupils' spelling of common words in Years 3 to 6 is not always accurate as the school has not paid sufficient attention to ensuring that presentation is always of the best quality. Handwriting is not sufficiently well developed and there are avoidable grammatical errors in some pupils' work.
- Opportunities are provided monthly for pupils to write at length but pupils do not write enough in all lessons to give them the confidence and skills to write quickly and accurately when asked to write for longer periods of time.
- Additional funding is used well for those pupils who are eligible and is enabling them to make improved progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils learning English as an additional language are also making better, and mostly good progress.
- Pupils in the DSP make good progress due to good teaching and good provision.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers use relevant life experiences to inspire pupils and make learning interesting. For example, in Year 1, a visit from Dave the owl man and his owls meant that pupils enthusiastically organised their knowledge about owls into different categories, such as diet and appearance, in preparation for writing a book about owls.
- Teachers in all year groups are adept at planning work which builds on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and extends them well to higher levels. For example, pupils in Year 2 had a remarkable knowledge of adverbs and where to use them, and pupils in Year 3 demonstrated a clear understanding of how and why to use paragraphs when writing an opening

paragraph for a letter to Mowgli's mum.

- Teachers are highly effective in helping pupils to make progress lesson by lesson. Their good questioning and explanations improve learning step-by-step during each and every lesson.
- Assessment is used well in the DSP to track pupils' progress and to identify their further needs.
- A strong emphasis is placed on drama and talk for writing. Teachers are creative in the way they provide opportunities for pupils to talk, as they know that children need to be able to talk in sentences before they can write them.
- Pupils showed great confidence when explaining their work to inspectors because of the close attention to the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is good, but it needs to be better in order for pupils make the outstanding progress needed for them to catch up so that standards in mathematics reach the national average. Teachers promote pupils' thinking well and they are aware that these could be applied more widely across different subjects.
- Presentation is too variable. Too little attention has been paid to the development of a good handwriting style in all classes. Because of the emphasis placed in some classes on getting pupils thoughts on paper, spelling errors and grammatical inaccuracies have gone unchecked.
- Well-trained teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in all lessons, through their questioning and challenge. They are given good guidance by teachers but use their initiative and are flexible in the use of their time.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work with support from adults, but also on their own, so they do not become dependent on adult help in order to learn. Pupils learning English as an additional language are given appropriate support and activities to enable them to make mostly good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that the good behaviour observed inside and out is typical of everyday behaviour in school. Notable is the quality of pupils' concentration and application to their work in lessons. They work together extremely well in a range of situations and take responsibility for their own improvement.
- Time and again pupils showed inspectors how they apply their own personal targets to the well-planned criteria provided by teachers to show them what they need to include in a successful piece of work. Furthermore, they have considerable skill in evaluating their own work and that of their peers, and clearly enjoy doing so.
- Vigorous action taken by the school has improved attendance to above average but, despite such strategies as a regular 'late gate', wake-up calls and, when necessary, picking pupils up at the beginning of the day, too many pupils are late for school. This disturbs their learning and that of other pupils.
- Pupils understand most of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying, although not all are fully aware of all aspects of homophobic bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe as a result of work in lessons and the reinforcement of safety and personal

development in assemblies.

- The well-organised procedures for behaviour management are used effectively by all staff, both in the main school and the DSP.

The leadership and management is good

- The school's swift and successful improvement is the result of the insight and persistence of the headteacher in tackling the concerns he identified when taking up his post in April 2011. Staff and governors have appreciated his decisive leadership. Training, support and the sharing of expertise, linked to robust performance management, have led to good leadership and management, and to good teaching.
- Sophisticated monitoring procedures carried out by the extended leadership team mean that all actions are checked for their impact on pupils' learning and progress. Staff training is followed up to make sure that staff are confident in new or revised procedures and are carrying them out appropriately. For example, the marking procedures introduced in the summer term are now proving very successful in improving pupils' work, including their homework.
- The leadership and management of the DSP is good. The subjects and activities taught give pupils a range of experiences including 'out of school' activities for one morning each week.
- The new arrangements for organising lessons and teaching for the school's revised curriculum, introduced in September 2012, gives pupils good opportunities to use reading, writing and, increasingly, mathematical skills across different subjects. The range of subjects and activities provides well for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and enriches their learning effectively.
- Pupils acknowledge each other's cultures and respect each other. The school has successfully eliminated discrimination. It is vigilant in overcoming underachievement and successful in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Most parents have a positive view of the school. Texting and the use of the website have improved communication. Reading afternoons, assemblies and class open sessions celebrating pupils' learning enable parents to see the school at work and have a greater understanding of what their children do at school. The parent forum is influential in bringing about change, for example to the homework policy and, as a result, homework is now highly effective.
- The school receives light touch support from the local authority. Strategically, the local authority recognised the calibre of leaders and the quality of action planning. The local authority is supporting the school in the process of moving to academy status.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Training has enabled governors to improve their practice and level of challenge. Through their monitoring, governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and accurately assess the school's effectiveness. Governors have access to performance data and to anonymised pupil progress data. They ask searching questions of senior leaders to challenge the school's performance, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body bring a range of different skills, which are used well. Governors are appropriately involved in the performance management of the headteacher and staff. Systems are in place for the approval of pay awards so that these are more closely tied to performance. Governors make sure that safeguarding procedures meet

requirements and are consistently applied. They know how the school budget is spent and make sure, for example, that additional funding such as the pupil premium is used well to support pupils' achievement. This funding has been spent entirely on additional staffing to support English and mathematics lessons in Years 4 to 6 and for additional intervention groups to help pupils to close gaps in their learning. The school is now effectively narrowing the gap in progress between pupils eligible for the funding and other groups.

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	121943
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	403910

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Craig
Headteacher	Jamie Nairn
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2012
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