

Kingsthorpe Village Primary School

Knights Lane, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 6QL

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement in writing and mathematics is not good enough.
- The quality of pupils' learning in lessons and the rates of pupils' progress over time are not consistently good throughout the school.
- Teaching is not leading to good learning in all classes because teachers do not always pitch work at challenging levels. This is because, in some instances, teachers' skills in assessing pupils' learning are insecure.
- In some classes, teachers' marking of pupils' work has too little impact in helping pupils to improve.
- The targets for pupils to achieve are not always clear or build on prior learning and pupils' progress towards them is not closely checked.
- Pupils do not use information and communication technology (ICT) enough as a day-to-day tool for learning
- Senior leaders and managers are not rigorous enough in checking the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the accuracy of teachers' assessments.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. Senior leaders are well supported by the governing body and the local authority in the drive to raise standards.
- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well. They feel safe and are well cared for.
- Attendance rates are above average. Punctuality is good.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Rapid improvements have been made in the breadth and quality of learning experiences provided for children in the Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 25 members of staff along with 34 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors scrutinised the school’s most recent survey of parental opinion.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, senior leaders and members of teaching and support staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plan, local authority evaluations of the school’s effectiveness, minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour records, safeguarding records, and documents related to the management of teachers’ performance.
- Inspectors looked at information about pupils’ progress, scrutinised the work in pupils’ books and heard a sample of pupils read.

Inspection team

Mike Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carolyn Wood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingsthorpe Village Primary is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll is set to rise as the school moves from one to two-form entry. Currently, there are two Reception classes and one class for each year group from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Most pupils are White British and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Over the past year, there have been significant changes in staffing and some disruption to teaching arrangements because of staff absence. Almost half of the teaching staff took up their posts in September 2013.
- There is pre-school provision school on the school site. This is not managed by the governing body and, therefore, is inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is always good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - improve their skills in assessing pupils' learning effectively during lessons, particularly through the use of well-focused questioning, in order to adjust the pitch of work so that it always provides achievable challenges
 - make sure that marking of pupils' work provides very clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve and check that pupils always correct their work when asked to do so
 - ensure that the targets set for individuals and groups of pupils to achieve in lessons are made very clear, build securely on previous learning, and that pupils' progress in reaching them is closely monitored.
- Ensure that senior leaders and managers demonstrate greater rigour in securing good or better achievement across all year groups by making sure that:
 - records of lesson observations are sharply focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning
 - systems for checking on the accuracy of teachers' assessments and the progress made by pupils include regular sampling of pupils work linked to teachers' records of pupils' achievement
 - provision of ICT is improved and used more effectively across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- About a third of the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey felt that teaching and progress are not good enough. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- Typically, children enter the Reception classes with skills that are mostly as expected for their age. By the time that pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. This picture of comparatively static progress illustrates why pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- National data for 2012 showed that all groups of pupils in Year 6, including those entitled to pupil premium funding, made less than expected progress in Key Stage 2 and this was reflected in the sharp drop in attainment in that year.
- However, despite some disruption to teaching resulting from staff absence during the 2012–13 year, the school ensured that most pupils made expected progress. Data for Year 2 and Year 6 in 2013, checked for accuracy by the local authority, show that the progress of all groups of pupils was close to national expectations and that standards returned to the broadly average level found in 2011.
- Data for other year groups in 2013 show that in reading, an increasing proportion of pupils are making good progress. There is also good progress in writing and mathematics in the classes where teaching is consistently good. However, in too many instances there are too few pupils who exceed national expectations for their progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- This picture of variable progress between year groups applies equally to pupils entitled to the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has used the pupil premium funding to improve resources and provide additional staff training for the teaching of phonics and mathematics, and to employ an additional teacher to help individual pupils in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. In 2013, the attainment of pupils eligible for premium funding was the same as that of other pupils in reading and close to the attainment of others in writing and mathematics. The progress of the few pupils who speak English as an additional language also fluctuates between year groups because of variation in the quality of teaching.
- Most pupils in the current Year 6 class are on course to attain nationally expected levels by the end of the school year.
- A specific focus on the teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters) in Reception and Key Stage 1 has resulted in a rise in the proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check when results for 2012 and 2013 are compared. Nonetheless the results from teacher assessment in 2013 were below the national average

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching was good in the majority of lessons seen, but in the remainder it requires improvement. A scrutiny of pupils' books, together with data about pupils' progress, reinforces this view.
- In weaker lessons, teachers do not always ask pupils sufficiently searching questions. On other occasions, teachers' questioning does not develop pupils' skills well enough because it focuses

tasks too narrowly. The consequence of these weaknesses is that teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels because they are unable to assess pupils' learning well enough.

- As part of the drive to improve teaching a specialist leader of education led several school improvement meetings during the 2012–2013 school year. These focused on teachers' planning, the setting of targets for pupils to achieve in lessons, marking and feedback to pupils. In all of these aspects of teaching there is some good practice. However, there are some teachers who have yet to fully embed agreed techniques in their day-to-day practice. Some of this inconsistency results from recent changes in staffing.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are sometimes insecure, and the school acknowledges that some of the assessments made in previous terms are likely to be unreliable.
- Currently, teaching in the Reception classes is good because teachers' planning is effective in challenging the children through a range of activities that sustain their interest and stimulate their imaginations. Continuity in teaching and learning, and the accuracy of assessments, in Reception in 2012–13 were adversely affected by staff changes during the course of the school year. Secure systems for checking on children's learning are now in place but are yet to provide the wide range of reliable information the school needs in order to take stock of children's progress in this key area.
- Consistent strengths in teaching are the good relationships between teachers and their pupils. These help pupils to develop confidence as learners. In all lessons, teachers are good at sustaining pupils' positive attitudes towards learning through their clear explanations and the range of activities they provide for their pupils.
- Where teaching is consistently good, teachers have well developed skills in questioning, and use these skills to gradually increase the level of challenge during the course of each lesson.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to develop pupils' learning. In most instances, they are skilled in using questions to help ensure that pupils think for themselves rather than becoming too reliant on them for support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Staff and parents believe that the school manages behaviour well. Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that behaviour is good 'because everyone knows the five Golden Rules' (care and share, show respect, have fun, try hard and work together).
- Instances of unacceptable behaviour are infrequent. Pupils and staff confirm that instances of bullying of any type are extremely rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils' social skills develop well. A secure foundation for this effective development is provided in the Reception classes, where children are encouraged to work together, either in pairs or small groups and learn how to take turns and share equipment.
- Throughout the school adults are strong role models and make sure that expectations of behaviour, caring attitudes and respect for one another are made consistently clear. This approach helps ensure that discrimination of any type has no place and that equality of

opportunity is promoted well.

- Pupils value the school greatly. Typical of the comments made by pupils is: 'It's a great school and it's the school to be at!'
- Pupils contribute well to the day-to-day life of the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 act as 'helping hands' by supporting younger pupils. The school council meets regularly and, last year, organised activities such as a school talent show and a sale of cakes to raise money for charity.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel that their children are happy, safe and well looked-after at school.
- Rates of attendance have steadily risen over the past few years and are now above average. The vast majority of pupils are punctual and arrive at school keen to learn.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the school has drawn up a clear agenda for improvement, leadership and management are not yet good because improvements over time have not been rapid enough and there is still too much teaching that is less than good.
- Senior leadership is not yet ensuring that all pupils sustain a good pace of learning in lessons and that this translates into good progress over time. This is because the monitoring of teaching and learning is inconsistent and does not focus sharply enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning in lessons. It is also because leaders and managers at all levels do not routinely sample pupils' work in order to check on the accuracy of teachers' assessments when monitoring the progress of pupils over time.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) as a day-to-day tool to support pupils' learning in class. The school is acutely aware of this and has plans in place to improve this aspect of its provision. Despite shortcomings in its ICT provision, the school is using technology to promote and develop links with other schools, both in the UK and abroad in order to help broaden pupils' horizons.
- Following the significant changes in staffing in September 2013, senior leaders are making reasonable progress in developing an effective tier of subject and other aspects of leadership through a rigorous selection process for new staff and the training and support provided. Staff interviewed commented on the new energy within the school, and the growing pace of change as teachers new to the school settle in.
- The local authority has been closely monitoring and helping improve the school's performance since it conducted a review of the school's effectiveness in February 2013. It has supported the improvements needed by ensuring that expertise from other schools has been used to help the school to develop provision, for example in the Reception classes and in leadership in mathematics. The local authority's view is that good progress has been made in addressing the points for improvement from the initial review, and inspectors agree.
- The English subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject and has a sound agenda for improvement based on a careful analysis of the good range of information gathered. The good improvements made in teaching and learning in phonics since 2012 demonstrates the growing capacity for further improvement in English.

- In mathematics, the subject leader is newly in post and is steadily developing the range of skills in monitoring and evaluation required in order to provide clear leadership.
- The curriculum for the Reception classes has improved significantly in recent months. The school carefully plans a good range of cross-curricular learning experiences for its pupils and augments these with a good range of activities at lunchtimes and after school. This helps ensure pupils' attitudes to the school and to their learning are positive. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors that they greatly appreciate what the school has to offer.
- The school is at an early stage of establishing plans to use the recently announced school sport funding to increase sporting opportunities for pupils. At this point there is no evidence of its impact on pupils' performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive and is effective in holding the school leaders to account for their actions. Governors are ambitious to secure improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. They know clearly what the school does well and where it must do better and ensure proper links are maintained between proposed salary increases, teaching quality and pupils' achievement. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is used and its impact on the achievement of the pupils entitled to it. Safeguarding arrangements, which are overseen by the governing body, fully meet requirements.

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	133732
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	425041

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Glithero
Headteacher	Elizabeth Smorfitt
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2012
Telephone number	01604 714223
Fax number	01604 792708
Email address	bursar@kvps.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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