

Kimpton Primary School

High Street, Kimpton, Herts, SG4 8RB

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher makes sure that all staff work to improve their performance and so raise the pupils' achievement. She is supported well in this by a strong team of senior and subject leaders.
- Governors are fully involved in shaping the school's direction. Their 'governor champions' carefully check the progress of action towards each priority in its improvement plan.
- Teachers are highly skilled and use very imaginative methods to interest and drive the pupils' learning forward. They expect pupils to try their best and continually get them to think and work things out themselves.
- Each pupil is known as an individual. This enables the school to provide each with the right sort of challenge and support.
- Topic themes provide many memorable experiences and support the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. They are given a firm foundation for their future learning in a stimulating environment.
- Pupils make rapid progress in reading. Most become avid readers, reading a wide range of books for pleasure in school and at home.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are very kind and considerate, helping to generate a very happy atmosphere throughout the school.
- A key factor in their good progress is the pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They are very keen to learn and to participate in lessons.
- Staff and governors do their utmost to ensure that pupils are safe in school. As a result, pupils feel secure and cared for well.
- The school successfully ensures parents are full partners in their children's learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small amount of teaching does not take sufficient account of what the pupils already know and can do.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes does not always move the more-able children forward quickly enough.
- Pupils do not consistently respond to their teacher's marking where they give suggestions for how work can be improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, four of which were seen together with the headteacher. All phonics (the sounds that letters make) groups were also visited in Years 1 and 2
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online parent questionnaire Parent View and held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also took account of the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to the reading of a sample of pupils in Year 2.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school receives the pupil premium for a smaller-than-average proportion of the pupils. This is extra government funding given to schools for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to bring greater consistency to the pupils' progress by:
 - making sure all lessons are sharply focused on moving the learning forward of all pupils
 - ensuring that teachers in the Nursery and Reception identify more-able children and provide them with challenging activities to move their learning forward more rapidly.
- Ensure that pupils respond to their teachers' comments in their marking in order to improve the quality of their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has tackled very successfully a drop in Year 6 test results in 2012. Pupils are making good progress across all key stages and attainment is rising. Results in 2013 were very high in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all pupils reached, and significant numbers exceeded, levels expected for their age. This gave them a very secure foundation for secondary school.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress through good teaching based on strong relationships in well-resourced and interesting indoor and outside environments. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is above average.
- The strong focus on teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) helps children to become confident readers. Almost all Reception children know their letters and sounds and the more able can put these together to write simple words and meaningful sentences. The wider reading skills of comprehension, inference and deduction become very refined as pupils move through Key Stage 2 benefitting from well taught 'Book Talk' sessions.
- Pupils also make good progress in their writing and mathematics. They write creatively in a wide range of styles including in their topic work. Their very secure number skills are put to good use when solving problems or undertaking practical activities. Their enquiry skills such as investigating, reasoning and deduction are particularly well-developed and used to support and extend their learning across all subjects.
- The school quickly and accurately identifies disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This enables support to be carefully tailored to meet their needs and adapted where necessary. As a result they make good progress in all areas and particularly in reading.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well through additional staffing to increase the progress of eligible pupils and raise their attainment. In 2012 at the end of Year 6 these pupils were approximately 5 terms behind their classmates in both English and mathematics. This wide gap was reversed in 2013 when eligible pupils gained marginally higher results than others in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much teaching is highly stimulating and engages the pupils so they are active participants in their learning. Teachers and support staff make clear to pupils that they have very high expectations of what can be achieved and how they should behave. Pupils remain focused on their work for long periods because they find it so interesting.
- The 'no hands up' rule makes sure pupils are fully attentive as they might be asked a question at any moment. Questioning is probing, targeted subtly so more-able pupils are challenged and at all times makes the pupils think deeply. Teachers continually use their questions to check pupils' understanding as lessons progress and adapt plans where necessary.
- The most effective lessons are based on a very clear assessment of what each pupil can do and what they need to learn next. This enables teachers to deploy the skilled team of support staff to where they can have the maximum impact on learning. Small-group teaching led by teachers and support staff makes a significant contribution to the pupils' rapid progress in reading.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception have many opportunities to work on activities led by adults, balanced carefully with those they can choose themselves. Adults make effective use of opportunities to observe what each child can do in order to plan the next steps in their learning. However, information gained is not consistently used to accurately identify the more able and accelerate their progress by providing them with more challenging activities.
- Teachers provide valuable guidance through detailed marking and regular opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others to clear criteria. Teachers tell pupils how well they have done and usually give suggestions as to how work can be improved. However, these are not always followed through by pupils or checked by teachers.
- Fluctuations in achievement are being ironed out vigorously but have not been eliminated completely. This is because a small amount of teaching is not pitched sharply at the different needs of the pupils and the next steps in an individual's learning. This slows the progress of pupils across the ability range.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are very polite and well-mannered. They take the time to look after each other and make sure everyone is included and not left out at playtime. There are very rarely any incidents where behaviour falls short of the school's high expectations. Pupils say bullying simply does not occur, a view which is echoed by parents and reflected in school records.
- From their start in the Nursery and Reception, children develop the skills and habits that support their learning very effectively. Children share activities and take turns amicably. They learn how to work independently by choosing their own resources and following their own ideas. These skills develop further as the pupils move up the school. They collaborate well particularly when in discussion with each other about questions posed by their teachers.
- Pupils respond instantly to their teachers so lessons proceed without the need to wait for their attention. Pupils greatly enjoy school and the wide range of exciting experiences provided for them. This is reflected in their readiness for learning at the start of the day and their above average and steadily rising attendance.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school, which is a view shared by parents and staff. They are taught how to evaluate risk in situations they might face and how to stay safe when using the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- Through her determined leadership the headteacher keeps everyone focused firmly and successfully on improving the quality of teaching, ensuring equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The headteacher rigorously manages the performance of teachers so that an increasing proportion of teaching is of an outstanding quality. The school's capacity for further improvement is based on accurate self-evaluation from which priorities for action are identified and action planned.
- One major change since the last inspection is in the impact of training of subject leaders on their ability to drive forward improvements in their areas. They are now very skilled. They play a crucial role in supporting the headteacher's drive to bring consistency to teaching. They support their colleagues and act as models of high quality teaching for others to observe and from which

they can learn.

- Local authority engagement has assisted the school significantly in identifying the steps needed to deal with the decline in Year 6 test results in 2012, and making sure robust systems are in place to check to impact of action.
- The partnership with parents is strong, enabling them to support their children's learning very effectively at home. In addition, 20 parents act as mentors for pupils. Parents are invited to spend time in class sharing some of the activities with their children. They are provided with valuable information on how to help them at home including participating in workshops about the scheme used to develop their reading.
- The creative linking of subjects through topics adds much to the pupils' enjoyment of learning. This was seen when Year 5 pupils prepared questions in an English lesson to elicit information from 'Pliny about Pompeii' in their study of Romans. Visitors make learning relevant and enjoyable such as in the science workshop for Year 5 and 6 pupils on microscopes. 'Philosophy for children' lessons enable pupils to discuss moral issues such as 'standing out from the crowd'. Activities such as 'Amazing Africa' give them a sharp awareness of the lives of others.
- The school is already making effective use of additional sports funding to cover the cost of better swimming lessons, increase participation in physical activities at lunchtime and increase the amount of specialist sports coaching expertise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides a high level of questioning, challenge and support for the headteacher, such as how new teachers are to be developed and the steps the school is to take to reverse the dip in Year 6 test results. Governors have a high degree of expertise on which to base their questions, particularly in their understanding of assessment data. By reorganising the structure of meetings they can now more closely check in detail on pupil progress. Governors are quite clear about the quality of teaching and the headteacher's action to bring about improvement, including how she uses formal processes to manage staff performance. They carefully check financial matters including checking on the impact of spending such as the pupil premium.

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	117118
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425427

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Roberts
Headteacher	Marion Stewart-Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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