

# Kings Farm Primary School

Cedar Avenue, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 5JT

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils, including the more able, make insufficient progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards are low.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils is ineffective, and the impact is not monitored closely enough by leaders.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not make sufficient progress. There are weaknesses in the leadership of this provision.
- There are shortcomings in leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently children do not learn as quickly as they should. Assessment procedures and links with parents and carers are underdeveloped.
- Despite recent improvements, teaching over time has failed to challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Learning support staff do not have sufficient impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teachers' guidance for pupils on improving the quality of their work often lacks clarity. Pupils do not routinely respond to teachers' comments in marking.
- The pace of school improvement is too slow as there is insufficient capacity in leadership at all levels.
- There is much work to do to extend and develop the effectiveness and impact of middle leaders.
- Little has been done to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum and new assessment procedures.

### The school has the following strengths

- The consultant headteacher has made an excellent start. She is very clear about what needs to be done. The school is more stable and there is an air of optimism. Senior leadership is being strengthened rapidly.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal and social development.
- The consultant headteacher has taken decisive steps to improve behaviour in lessons and around the school. As a result, there have been no exclusions this term, and most pupils show enthusiasm for learning.
- Relationships with parents and carers are improving rapidly.
- Systems for the management of teachers' performance are now in place.
- All procedures for the safeguarding of pupils have been reviewed and are now secure. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- With greater access to information, governors are now more knowledgeable about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' written work for the current and previous school year, and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the school's senior leaders, a National Leader of Education and with specialist advisors from the local authority. A discussion was held with two senior representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the staff questionnaire and 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including local authority reviews and action plans, and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also considered minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress.

## Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Keith Homewood	Additional Inspector
Christine Taylor	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.*

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

### Information about this school

- Kings Farm Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has grown steadily in recent years.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action in 2013/14 was above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs was well above average.
- The school did not meet government floor standards in 2013, the last year for which validated data is available. These set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It is not possible to report whether the school met government floor standards in 2014, as the 2014 school data for the achievement of Year 6 pupils has been suppressed by the Standards Agency, pending investigation.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club which was reviewed as part of this inspection. It also offers an after-school care club for two afternoons per week. Neither of these after-school care club sessions could be observed during the period of the inspection.
- There is a children's centre on the same site. This is managed and inspected separately.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for children in Nursery and Reception years. Nursery children attend on a part-time, sessional basis. Reception children attend full-time.
- Under a recent agreement, the school is supported by a National Leader of Education who is the headteacher of Ifield Special School in Gravesend.
- A small number of children in the Kings Farm Nursery are supported directly by the staff of Ifield Special School on an observation and assessment basis, to facilitate decisions as to their future educational needs. Some then transfer to the Reception class at Ifield when they leave the Nursery.
- The school has experienced a high level of turbulence in its leadership recently. The substantive headteacher left in December 2013. An executive headteacher took up post in January 2014 and left in July 2014. The current headteacher, who is a consultant headteacher directly employed by Kent County Council, joined the school on a temporary basis from September 2014. Of the four members of the senior leadership team who were in post when term started in September 2014, only two, including the consultant headteacher, now remain.
- A review of safeguarding was carried out by the local authority, at the school's request, in September 2014.
- Around two thirds of the teaching and support staff left the school in July 2014.
- The school has been in consultation for an extended period in relation to conversion to academy status. This proposal is now on hold.
- The inspection team was aware during the inspection of several ongoing investigations by the appropriate authorities into allegations of wrongdoing; these were not related to either child protection or safeguarding arrangements. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered, where appropriate, alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection, to inform the inspectors' judgements.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that:

- teachers have high expectations of what pupils might achieve and set work that is consistently challenging, particularly for the most-able pupils
  - the marking of pupils' work offers specific guidance as to how pupils can improve their performance
  - pupils have the opportunity to respond to marking
  - teachers have the skills necessary to ensure a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading
  - the work of learning support staff is closely monitored and consistently effective.
- Improve pupils' achievement, by ensuring that:
- children enter Year 1 with appropriate knowledge and skills so they are better prepared for learning in Key Stage 1
  - pupils make accelerated progress throughout Years 1 to 6 to enable them to catch up with their peers nationally
  - the progress of disadvantaged pupils is effectively supported and closely monitored
  - pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive effective support which is closely monitored and enables them to make accelerated progress in line with the others.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
- sustained action is taken to enhance senior leaders' and governors' capacity to drive improvement
  - the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of middle leaders, including the leadership of provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are developed
  - the school is better-placed to implement the new curriculum and new assessment systems
  - procedures are in place to enable school leaders to monitor and evaluate the impact of those funds specifically designated for the support of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve Early Years Foundation Stage provision by:
- improving the opportunities for children to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and number
  - ensuring that all activities are purposeful and provide greater challenge, especially for the more able
  - ensuring all staff have a thorough understanding of Early Years Foundation Stage practice
  - implementing more effective assessment procedures so that staff have an accurate view of children's knowledge and skills
  - increasing opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in, and knowledgeable about, their children's learning
  - improving the leadership of Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

---

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are inadequate

- The school community has experienced extensive disruption and instability recently. There has been considerable discontent among the staff, culminating in significant changes in staffing. Parents and carers have publicly demonstrated their lack of confidence in the school leadership. These matters, the rapid deterioration in standards, and the ongoing investigations have adversely affected morale and contributed to wholesale changes in leadership and management.
- Leadership lacks the capacity to drive rapid improvement because the senior leadership team has been depleted. However, the appointment of a highly skilled consultant headteacher is enabling the school to get back on track. An experienced deputy headteacher has been appointed from November 2014, and the appointment of a National Leader for Education, on a consultancy basis, is also strengthening leadership.
- Middle leadership roles are underdeveloped. Some post holders have yet to develop their skills in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Elsewhere, there is a lack of expertise and impact. The leadership of provision for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is not effective. There is insufficient awareness of the progress these pupils make or of the effectiveness of additional support activities. Administrative tasks are not always discharged promptly, affecting the quality of provision.
- The new headteacher is providing excellent leadership. She has accurately identified all the key areas for improvement and has undertaken a comprehensive review of staffing. Self-evaluation is therefore accurate. A comprehensive safeguarding review has enabled inherited weaknesses to be addressed and resolved. Strategies for bringing about improvements are being implemented in a timely manner, avoiding staff being overworked. Most staff support the headteacher's vision.
- The monitoring of teaching is thorough and accurate. Management procedures for setting targets for teachers have not been effective in the past. A more robust system is now in place, linked to appraisal and salary progression. A programme of professional development has been established to improve teaching, learning and the accuracy of assessment.
- The absence of historic school data and other documentation, prior to the current term, has provided additional challenges for the leadership team.
- The curriculum is mostly broad and balanced. However, the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not ensure that children acquire sufficient skills to be prepared well for the work in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of reading requires improvement. Elsewhere, the challenge offered in many classes is not sufficient to enable pupils to make good progress. Other than in English, the school has done little to prepare for the implementation of the new curriculum or for the introduction of a new assessment system.
- No evaluation of the impact of pupil premium expenditure was carried out in the last school year. The current plan has recently been implemented but there is, to this point, no means of evaluating its impact.
- Additional funding to extend pupils' opportunities in sport was largely used to improve resourcing. Consequently, leaders have had little impact on increasing participation rates. Current plans focus more on the provision of additional activities which enable pupils to be more actively involved.
- Since September, the school has received good support from the local authority.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils are prepared adequately for the diversity of life in modern Britain.
- The school is re-establishing positive links with parents and carers following a significant breakdown in confidence. A strong partnership exists with Ifield Special School.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors play an increasing role in school leadership. Through a period of turmoil they have supported the school loyally. Their work has recently been reviewed and developed by local authority training. They are increasingly confident in holding school leaders to account. They ask questions about pupils' achievement although, until recently, they have often failed to receive the anticipated responses. They recognise that school performance has dipped in relation to schools nationally. They are committed to improving teaching and achievement in order to improve equality of opportunity. They are committed to tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They know about the quality of teaching. Overall, they ensure that pay and promotion are aligned to teachers' effectiveness. Governors have not previously had the opportunity to evaluate the appropriateness of decisions about the deployment of the additional funding to close gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils. There has, until recently, been insufficient accountability for the expenditure of this income. Otherwise, governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for pupils' safeguarding.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although there have been many positive changes since the start of the new school year, the good behaviour and attitudes seen in some lessons are not yet consistent across the school.
- Exclusions rose considerably last year but no pupils have been excluded this term. Despite many staff changes and teaching that does not always challenge pupils, most are keen to learn. In some lessons they are attentive, polite and cooperate well. When lessons do not interest pupils, and adults fail to engage and motivate them, some lose concentration and do not work hard.
- Pupils undertake duties as play leaders and monitors, so contributing to the smooth running of these activities.
- Inappropriate behaviour is now rare. Appropriate behaviour management systems ensure that teachers respond decisively to poor behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance has been well below the national average in the past three years. It is improving but is still slightly below the national average.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Actions taken following a recent safeguarding review have ensured that current arrangements meet national requirements. The well-managed breakfast club ensures that pupils who arrive early at school are well cared for.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will manage any difficulties that arise.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about a range of risks. Year 6 pupils, for example, understand the potential dangers of cyber-bullying.
- Some parents and carers indicated concerns about pupils' behaviour and the school's response to bullying. However, there is no current evidence to support these views. Pupils feel that all forms of bullying are promptly dealt with.

**The quality of teaching** is inadequate

- Teaching over time has not enabled pupils to make sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A considerable number of staff are new to the school. While there is now greater stability and commitment, and expectations are rising, the level of challenge teachers provide remains variable.
- Systems for checking and improving pupils' progress are not driving consistently rapid progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, pupils are rarely expected to respond to marking; identified points for improvement are not always followed up. Teachers' questioning is not always used well to reshape tasks during lessons, for example if pupils require further explanation of a task.
- Pupils' written work has not been consistently well presented in the past. Handwriting is underdeveloped for many pupils. Higher expectations have been established now but are too recent to show impact.
- Reading skills are not supported consistently well across the school. Guided reading is not effective. Recently-purchased texts to support guided reading are about to be introduced.
- While some learning support staff support pupils well, there is too much variation in their impact.
- Some teachers offer more challenge. In a Year 2 art lesson, pupils were learning about Rangoli patterns, linked to their developing knowledge of Hinduism. Pupils were enthusiastic and clear about what they were expected to achieve. They worked quickly, producing innovative patterns using the Rangoli style. While there were missed opportunities to promote cultural understanding further, they successfully developed their artistic skills.

**The achievement of pupils** is inadequate

- Most of the school's data on pupils' past performance cannot be located. The local authority considers the submitted data for the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2014 to be inaccurate. The national test data for Year 6 pupils in 2014 has been suppressed, pending investigation. Consequently, the school has little information on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Assessments are now in hand to establish an accurate evaluation of pupils' current attainment levels.

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. Despite recent improvements, children make insufficient progress because the planning of work is not sufficiently aligned to their needs. Only a few children were said to have left Reception having achieved a good level of development.
- Standards in all subjects by the end of Year 2 are well below average. Pupils do not make enough progress during Years 1 and 2 to make up for their low starting points and catch up with other pupils of their age.
- Significantly fewer pupils reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) screening test in 2014 than in 2013, and figures were well below those seen nationally.
- There is no validated data to demonstrate the performance of Year 6 pupils in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics and no record of their prior progress. In 2013, Year 6 attainment levels were exceptionally low in all subjects. Progress in that year was inadequate, although that had not been the case previously.
- Pupils' current work, and their work in lessons, indicates that progress is now improving. There is a focus across the school on improving pupils' writing and in addressing gaps in learning in mathematics.
- It is not possible to analyse progress in different year groups or subjects as the school is not able to provide this information. This includes the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. However, in 2013, the attainment gap in English and mathematics between disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and other pupils, including all pupils nationally, was approximately one and a half terms.
- The personal and social needs of pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage are supported well. Most attend regularly but their progress is not consistently good enough.
- Inadequacies in the monitoring of provision and outcomes for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, together with weak planning, explain these pupils' underachievement.
- The more-able pupils have not been supported well enough to enable them to achieve their potential. The absence of school assessment data prevents a more detailed analysis, although progress for this group, as for others, is improving.
- In the current more stable circumstances pupils' work in lessons and the quality of their writing indicates that expectations are rising.

### The early years provision

### is inadequate

- Children make insufficient progress in developing their basic skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children entered Reception in 2013 with skill levels below those typical for their age. Few children achieved a good level of development in 2014. Consequently, children were poorly prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Early years provision and outcomes have declined. There have been significant changes in staffing and in the quality of provision. Too many activities lack purpose and the teaching does not provide tasks which are well matched to children's needs or promote meaningful learning. There is not enough challenge for the more-able children.
- Parents and carers are not sufficiently involved in children's learning and, because of a lack of effective assessment procedures, parents are unclear how well their children are progressing.
- There is insufficient clarity over leadership; with the leader believing she is only responsible for Reception. Ultimately, there is not enough specialist expertise to drive rapid improvement. This is compounded by staff changes.
- The school has positive links with the nearby special school. Those children in the Nursery class for observation and assessment prior to final placement, are well supported by the assigned specialist staff.
- The school is receiving effective support from specialist local authority staff. There has already been some improvement in the learning environments and in aspects of daily practice.
- The school ensures that the youngest children are safe and well looked after.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118585
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	451454

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mandy Cartwright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Taylor (Consultant Headteacher KCC)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 566979
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 567767
<b>Email address</b>	office@kings-farm.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

