

Kingsthorne Primary School

Cranbourne Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, B44 0BX

Inspection dates 24–25 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Despite some improvement since the last inspection, leaders and governors have not secured consistently good teaching and good achievement across the school.
- School leaders do not focus sharply enough on pupils' progress when they check the quality of teaching and learning in lessons or in pupils' books.
- Subject and key stage leaders do not rigorously check that the levels awarded to pupils are accurate, especially in writing.
- Some pupils lose interest in their work and this slows their progress when teachers do not move learning on well enough.
- Pupils' attendance is rising but still not high enough. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above average.
- Teachers do not frequently check the progress of all pupils during lessons to enable them to pick up and correct mistakes as they occur.
- Teachers do not always explain tasks clearly so that pupils know what they have to do.
- Teachers' marking is often not detailed enough to help pupils improve their work. Not all teachers check pupils' responses to the guidance they are given to confirm their better understanding.
- Pupils' progress is not good as they move through the school. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014, and lower than in 2013.
- The early years provision does not sufficiently develop children's basic skills, especially their literacy and speaking skills. Children in the Nursery do not have enough opportunities to choose their own activities and this limits their personal and social development.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving. Current pupils are making better progress.
- Governors are becoming increasingly effective in response to the independent review they commissioned.
- Leaders have managed the increase in the numbers of pupils well. New pupils settle quickly and are fully included.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Pupils use phonics (letters and the sounds they make) well in reading.
- Pupils are well cared for. Consequently, they feel safe, know how to keep themselves safe and who to talk to if they have a problem.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show respect for others and understand the views of those from other cultures or with different beliefs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 25 part-lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and survey information collected by the school. They spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school and considered the views expressed by parents who sent letters to the inspection team.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire were received from 33 staff, and their views were taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including: the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Cox

Additional Inspector

Russell Hinton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingsthorne Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils has increased since the previous inspection as the school continues its expansion to become two-form entry.
- The proportion of pupils leaving or joining other than at the usual times is above the national average.
- The school has a Nursery class which children attend on a part-time basis. They attend the two Reception classes full time. There are 11 other classes.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils are White British with the others coming from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club.
- The school receives support from a Local Leader of Education funded by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and achievement by making sure that teachers:
 - check the progress of all pupils during lessons and pick up and address misunderstandings as they occur
 - explain tasks clearly so that pupils understand what they are to learn
 - move pupils' learning on in lessons so that they do not lose interest in their work
 - provide specific guidance in marking to help pupils improve their work, especially in writing, and check their responses to confirm their better understanding.
- Improve the early years provision by increasing opportunities to:
 - promote children's early literacy and speaking skills
 - give children more opportunities to select their preferred task or activity, especially in Nursery.
- Increase the impact of school leaders on improving teaching and raising achievement by:
 - focusing more clearly on pupils' progress during lessons and in their books over time when checking the quality of teaching and learning
 - making sure that subject and key stage leaders use a wide range of evidence when checking the levels awarded to pupils in their work, especially writing, so that these leaders are assured that levels are accurate.
- Improve attendance by working closely with the few parents who do not ensure that their children attend school regularly by convincing them more effectively of the value of the education the school provides.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not established a culture in which teaching is consistently good across the school and pupils always behave well and want to learn. As a result, achievement is too variable and pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 and 2014 did not reach the levels of which they were capable.
- School leaders check the quality of teaching and learning frequently, but they do not place enough emphasis on the progress that pupils make during lessons or in their books. For example, the quality of teaching might be judged to be good when pupils make expected rather than good progress. Consequently, teaching is not having the impact on progress and achievement intended.
- The quality of key stage and subject leadership varies too much. Better training and vigorous action are leading to pupils' improved achievement in reading and mathematics. However, the impact on writing is less positive. Pupils' abilities are not always accurately assessed or areas of weakness identified as leaders do not use a wide enough range of evidence. Consequently, the levels given for writing are overly generous as pupils are not secure in their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Until recently, leaders identified too many pupils as ones with special educational needs, when they were underachieving due to previously weak teaching. This situation has been resolved and, as a result, the school has a much more accurate view of pupils' learning needs and makes better response to them.
- Leaders create a harmonious and positive climate for learning. The many pupils joining the school in all year groups during term time is managed successfully and all pupils settle quickly and are fully included. Pupils currently in school are making better progress because the quality of teaching is improving. There is no inadequate teaching in the school and there are fewer serious behavioural incidents. As a result, its recent track record shows the school has the capacity to secure further improvement.
- Leaders strongly promote equality of opportunity and tackle any discrimination. Good provision is made for pupils' differing abilities. As a result, many areas of learning show improvement, including in phonics in the early years provision, literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Leaders have planned successfully to deliver the new National Curriculum. The school is beginning to implement a carefully revised system of assessment that the pupils are helped to understand. Leaders track and measure the progress of all groups of pupils using this new system. Consequently, a more accurate evaluation of pupils' progress and attainment is becoming established so that weaknesses can be addressed.
- Pupils enjoy the curriculum and the additional visits and visitors that enrich their learning. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated, resulting in a very cohesive community. Activities, assemblies and topics all contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have good understanding and appreciation of others' cultures and beliefs. They have a good understanding of British values, such as respect for others and knowing right from wrong. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is used to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make at least expected progress along with their classmates. Use of funding includes appointments of staff to support eligible pupils, additional resources to improve reading and mathematical skills and support for families with particular difficulties, such as attendance.
- Sports premium funding is used to pay for specialist coaching to deliver physical education lessons, run clubs and develop teachers' skills. As a result, pupils achieve more in physical education and sport and show greater enthusiasm and participation so their health and well-being benefit.
- The local authority has funded support from a local school and termly visits from a Local Leader of Education. These actions are helping the school to share ideas and develop better practice in teaching and

management. Leaders report that training provided by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) since the previous inspection is hugely beneficial. Consequently, improvement is effectively directed to key priorities.

- Leaders and governors make sure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils and staff are effective and meet all statutory requirements. As a result, the school is a safe place to be.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has changed considerably since the previous inspection and is increasingly effective.
- Governors have gained a realistic understanding of the quality of teaching and the school's effectiveness. They visit the school regularly to investigate its performance for themselves and obtain increasingly comprehensive information on pupils' achievement that they analyse and interpret accurately.
- They check that the performance of teachers is managed effectively and according to school policy and make sure that teachers' pay rewards are linked to pupils' achievement. They know what the quality of teaching is across the school. No salary increases have been authorised in the last two years as governors are aware that standards have not improved as intended.
- Governors have an increasingly accurate understanding of school and published data and receive regular updates from leaders on the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- The governors are highly committed to school improvement and, in order to carry out their own roles more effectively, commissioned their own independent review of governance last year. This has helped them to identify where they can further improve their own practice and they are actively doing so.
- Governors have a good grasp of the difference the pupil premium funding is making to closing achievement gaps between eligible pupils and others. They carry out their statutory duties effectively, including the checks on keeping pupils and staff safe and the management of the school budget.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils do not always show positive attitudes to learning. During some activities, pupils do not get on well with their tasks because they are not sure what they should be doing and struggle to concentrate on their work. Pupils' uncertainty leads to them fidgeting in class, not completing work and slower rates of progress.
- Although improving, attendance is still below average and the proportion of persistently absent pupils is above the national rate. Absence has an adverse impact on pupils' learning as some pupils miss key lessons and their pattern of attendance hinders their progress.
- Leaders have taken action to work with families to improve attendance and have introduced incentives to encourage more pupils to attend regularly. This action is having some success. The family support worker liaises closely with pupils who struggle to attend regularly in order to improve their attendance. However, some parents take pupils on extended holidays abroad during term time, without the consent of the school, to the detriment of their children's education.
- Around the school, pupils are polite and courteous. They are friendly to visitors and are respectful to staff and each other. Pupils are very aware of the rewards and consequences of their conduct and feel that they are helped to manage their behaviour. They particularly like the headteacher's certificates, stickers and 'role model' badges. Pupils say that behaviour is good and has improved. This change is well evidenced through school records and a reduction in exclusions from school.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are clear that if there are any issues, adults take swift action when incidents are reported.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet. They know who to go to if

they have a problem. The parents who expressed a view think that their children are well cared for and safe in school.

- Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully applied. Any accidents are carefully recorded and regular site checks are carried out, including by governors, to make sure that the building and outside areas are safe and secure. Checks are made of all staff to ensure they are safe to work with children.
- School records show that leaders take positive action to address any concerns, including any racism or bullying, and are strongly committed to tackling any discrimination.
- Staff have received appropriate training to support pupils' personal needs, and referrals for vulnerable pupils are well documented. All adults, including governors, demonstrate strong awareness of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils are well supervised at break and lunchtime. The breakfast club provides a safe and nurturing environment for pupils before school. This is a valuable resource for parents and has made a positive contribution to improving pupils' attendance.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching of reading, writing and mathematics requires improvement because it has not helped pupils to develop their skills and make consistently good progress in these subjects. Phonics is better taught than other skills.
- Teachers and other adults do not frequently check on the progress and understanding of pupils in order to identify and address errors and misunderstandings as they occur. For example, teachers do not always correct pupils' misuse of grammar, punctuation and spelling, or their poor grip on pencils when writing.
- Explanations are not always clear enough and, as a result, some pupils do not understand what they are to learn and need to do. In some lessons, pupils lose interest because teachers do not help them to sustain interest in the learning intended. Consequently, pupils do not complete enough work and make good progress. Some pupils are overly reliant on adults and are unable to work on their own.
- Leaders are focused on improving the quality of teachers' marking in response to pupils' work. The system is used consistently across the school. Teachers are, increasingly, adding comments or setting additional tasks to check pupils' understanding. However, the comments made are not always focused sharply enough on what pupils need to do next to improve their work, especially in writing. Teachers do not check the accuracy of pupils' correction of their work after pupils have responded to the guidance given.
- Writing is not yet taught effectively across the school. Consequently, pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting are not well developed.
- Early reading is taught well and pupils develop good skills in breaking down and sounding out difficult words. Older pupils have positive attitudes to reading and enjoy a wide range of books which the school has added to the library. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and regularly. As a result, achievement in reading is rising.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving as a result of staff training and a whole-school focus on this subject. Teachers have developed their subject knowledge and plan more challenging work for pupils of all abilities. For example, the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 and younger pupils were well challenged in lessons seen during the inspection. Consequently, pupils' progress is, currently, improving and more are working to higher levels.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to supporting pupils in lessons, including the disadvantaged, the disabled and those who have special educational needs. This support enables these pupils to keep up with their classmates, but teaching assistants are not yet ensuring these pupils' good

progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school. Attainment at the end of each key stage is below average. Standards improved at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2013, following the previous inspection, but then fell again in 2014.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress from their different starting points regardless of their time at the school. All attained below-average results.
- The school's own data show that better progress is, currently, being made in all year groups and standards are rising in Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, more pupils are reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics in Year 6, although standards are still below average and require further improvement.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 screening check was average in both 2013 and 2014. Younger pupils successfully break down words they find difficult by using their knowledge of letters and sounds. Older pupils have very positive attitudes to reading and many read for pleasure.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement because too few make good progress over time. Identification of pupils with special educational needs was previously inaccurate and, although this situation has been resolved and a wider range of information is used to assess pupils and track what they do, their progress is not yet good.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement in line with that of their classmates. Disadvantaged pupils who left Year 6 in 2014 were two terms behind others in the school in mathematics and one term behind in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils were over a year behind other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and two terms behind in writing.
- More effective use of pupil premium funding is currently successfully closing gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils with that of others. The in-school attainment gap has virtually closed for pupils up to and including Year 4, with a small gap currently remaining in Years 5 and 6.
- Although the progress of the most able pupils is not good over time, the proportion of these pupils reaching the higher levels is increasing, especially in mathematics. This is because work is more challenging for them and they are responding better to it. Lessons seen during the inspection confirmed this improvement.
- Pupils of minority ethnic heritage are well supported and receive additional adult help when it is needed. They make similar progress to that of their peers.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Some children join the school in Nursery but most join in the Reception year. Some enter school with weak skills in several areas, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Although all make progress, it is not consistently good and fewer children reached a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2013 and 2014 than the proportion usually found nationally. Some, therefore, are not well prepared to enter Year 1.
- In the main, teachers plan learning well to develop children's basic skills. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to talk about what they are doing and adults do not always use language well

enough themselves for the children to learn correct expression. This restricts children's speech development and delays their acquisition of reading and writing skills. Children in Nursery are not always given enough opportunities to select the materials they want to use or the activities which interest them and this limits the development of their personal and social skills.

- Leaders have created a safe and nurturing environment where children feel safe and are happy. Areas where provision can be improved have been identified and, as a result, achievement is rising, as shown by the work in children's books and comprehensive assessment made by teachers. Teachers record children's progress systematically and gather evidence to show what progress is being made.
- Effective routines ensure a smooth transition into either Nursery or Reception classes. Children learn how to get on together and settle quickly into its routines. Most children listen attentively to adults at all times and tackle activities purposefully but there are some who call out when teachers are talking or become restless when they are kept waiting too long to start an activity.
- Whether learning indoors or outdoors, adults ensure that children are safe at all times. For example, children were not allowed outdoors for a mathematics activity until the teacher was certain that all gates were properly locked at the start of the day.

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	103368
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	453766

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
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Callaghan
Headteacher	Joanne Loach
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2013
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