

Kingsthorpe Village Primary School

Knights Lane, Kingsthorpe, Northampton NN2 6QL

Inspection dates	24–25 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and effective senior leadership. They have created a culture where staff work together with a shared vision to provide the very best for every pupil.
- Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and are committed to driving forward continued improvement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers plan lessons that excite and stimulate pupils.
- Learning gets off to a good start in the early years. A broad range of interesting activities enables children to explore, experiment and grow in confidence.
- The governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are now very knowledgeable about their role and provide highly effective challenge and support to school leaders.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of enrichment activities, visits and visitors, which extend their experiences and personal development.
- Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous to one another. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View and spoke to inspectors are of the view that their children are happy, safe and making good progress in their learning, and inspectors agree.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The level of challenge for pupils, particularly the most able, is too variable.
- The work of the teaching assistants is not focused enough on pupils' individual learning needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers judge the level of challenge in activities better, particularly for the most able pupils
 - teaching assistants are provided with further opportunities to develop their skills and expertise in order to improve their effectiveness in promoting pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- This is a school that enacts its core values: 'Together Everyone Achieves More' (TEAM). The headteacher, working in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, has worked extremely effectively to improve all aspects of the school's work. The very large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed. One parent reported that the school 'has improved immeasurably' since the last inspection.
- Governors and staff are united in their intention to provide the best education and care for the pupils. They have established an ethos of high expectations. Pupils respond well to these and as a result make good progress, behave well and enjoy learning at school.
- Senior leaders know the school inside out. School improvement work is based on an accurate and comprehensive view of where improvements are needed. Regular and detailed checks are made on the quality of teaching and if any weaknesses are identified, urgent action is taken to provide appropriate support, challenge, advice and training.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively and closely linked to pupils' progress. Clear expectations are set for staff that rates of progress for all pupils will increase throughout the school. High-quality professional development is carefully planned to link with whole-school priorities as well as individual teachers' needs. Staff are well motivated. In fact, the very large majority who completed the questionnaire are proud to be a member of staff at the school and enjoy working there. As a result, teaching is effective.
- Subject and other leaders manage their areas of responsibility well. All leaders frequently check pupils' work, observe learning and provide useful guidance for teachers on how to improve things. Teachers say they find this helpful.
- The curriculum is well planned and connects subjects together in an interesting and engaging way. Themed work routinely includes visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Learning in English and mathematics is enhanced extremely well by many other subjects and additional activities. Pupils experience a wide range of interests including chess, choir, drama, music and sport. The curriculum strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have developed and are implementing an assessment system that supports pupils' learning and achievement throughout the curriculum. Frequent moderation and progress checks help to ensure consistency and support teaching staff in their planning, teaching and assessment practices so that pupils make good progress. Teachers are still coming to terms with this new approach and are increasing their confidence and understanding to make accurate judgements.
- Pupils understand the need to become responsible citizens and they relish being given positions of responsibility such as house captains and young leaders. At playtimes, pupils of all ages play and socialise extremely well together. A wide range of activities are provided to ensure that there are plenty of things to do to keep pupils occupied and engaged.
- The development of British values is strong in the school, with pupils taking part in democratic processes such as the election of school councillors. In lessons, as well as around the school, pupils show high levels of respect and get on well together. There are extremely positive relationships between all pupils and adults in the school. The school promotes equality of opportunity successfully and does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium are now making strong progress throughout the school due to well targeted support. Individual teaching, group work and in-class support are provided to meet their needs and as a result, most achieve as well as their classmates.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has made a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being. It enables a broad range of experiences such as specialist sports coaches who help run the 'Change4life' club, as well as additional clubs and training for staff. The school has increased the range of PE and sport, and works closely with the Northampton Town Schools Sports Partnership to play competitive fixtures such as cross-country, basketball and football. These improvements have resulted in an increase in the numbers of pupils taking part in PE and sport, participation in local competitions and improved behaviour at lunchtime.
- Strong partnerships formed with two local primary schools are helping to bring about improvement. Leaders at all levels have the professional trust to challenge and support each other, which is contributing to raised standards and increased staff confidence. The local authority provided intensive support

immediately following the last inspection. As leaders increased in confidence and capability, the local authority tapered its support because it rightly judged leaders had good capacity for improvement.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Since the last inspection governance has improved significantly. Under the exceptional leadership of the chair of governors, the governing body has recruited skilled professionals and committed members who take their responsibilities extremely seriously. Consequently, the governing body is highly effective in holding school leaders to account for standards and quality.
 - Governors share the vision and expectations of the headteacher and contribute significantly to the improvements made since the last inspection. They have formulated their own improvement plan, which outlines their priorities and developments for the future.
 - Governors know the school and the pupils extremely well because they visit the school regularly. They are diligent in their focus on the priorities for improvement and ensure that goals set are achieved. They are meticulous in making sure that no aspect of the work is neglected.
 - Governors regularly challenge senior leaders and set high standards for the headteacher through his performance management objectives.
 - Governors ensure that additional funds are used appropriately so that staff provide the best possible help for pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are vigilant and well trained in order to keep pupils safe and to identify any potential issues.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved. It is now typically good because teachers have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff are positive, confident and friendly; this creates a good environment for learning. Positive relationships and interesting learning activities, supported by good resources, help capture pupils' interests.
- Teachers generally use assessment information well to identify and plan for pupils' needs in each lesson and over time. There are occasions when work is not matched accurately enough to some pupils' needs. Work is sometimes too difficult. As a result, pupils find it difficult to understand what they are required to do. Occasionally work is not challenging enough so the most able are not stretched beyond their comfort zone. In these instances, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Lessons start crisply and set an appropriate learning pace. Pupils usually respond well, are engaged and motivated to learn. In a Year 1 lesson, for instance, the teacher employed a range of engaging strategies to discuss why God saved Noah and the animals. Pupils are happy to work together and have a positive attitude to learning. Teachers structure lessons well to support learning. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop ideas and plan how to tackle tasks.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and make regular reference to past learning in lessons. The content of pupils' extended writing is interesting, imaginative and thoughtful. The recent introduction of the school's handwriting policy is paying dividends. The quality of pupils' handwriting shows a marked improvement since the beginning of the academic year and pupils have an enormous sense of pride when they are awarded their pen licence.
- Pupils particularly enjoy the themes they study, which incorporate subjects such as science, history, geography, art and design and technology. For instance, Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the practical science activity where they investigated the capacity of their lungs. There are plenty of lively displays of pupil's work in classrooms and corridors.
- Staff develop a strong ethos for learning and good behaviour. Attractive and supportive displays help guide pupils' learning and set high expectations. Teachers use rewards well to motivate pupils to do their best. Staff implement the school's behaviour policy effectively and pupils are expected to behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- The work of teaching assistants is variable. Although they are helpful in chivvying pupils and encouraging them to make the necessary effort so that they stay on task, this is not sufficient to support all pupils to make as much progress as they could. For example, teaching assistants do not identify opportunities to deepen the pupils' learning often enough, including in the early years, and the questions that they ask the pupils are sometimes not probing enough.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs are provided with good-quality support. Leaders have established regular pupil progress meetings which ensure that need is identified quickly and support is provided promptly. As a result, identified pupils make good progress in lessons and over time.

- Marking and checking of pupils' progress informs pupils of their next stages and helps teachers know when pupils need extra help. Pupils usually respond to marking promptly, which helps to reinforce their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. For example, the school carries out careful risk assessments into aspects of health and safety and addresses any issues promptly. As a result, pupils feel safe at the school and enjoy being there.
- The school's culture successfully promotes confidence in the pupils, as learners and as young members of society. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities in school such as house, assembly or milk monitors.
- Many pupils speak enthusiastically about the different ways in which they learn and the opportunities they have to learn about themselves, people and places. They know that all adults in the school support them very well and value their achievements and successes.
- Pupils show good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances, including using the internet and mobile phones, as a result of the wide variety of opportunities provided by the school to learn about such things.
- A few parents believe that the school does not deal effectively with bullying, but inspectors found no evidence to support this view. Pupils understand what bullying is and report that it is rare. They also say that when incidents do arise, staff deal with them rapidly and effectively. The school's records also show this to be the case.
- Pupils' attendance matches the national average but school leaders are not content with this and believe it should be higher. Positive systems are in place to encourage regular attendance and clear management systems are in place to monitor attendance and lateness. The school's family link worker has established positive relationships with parents where attendance is an issue.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are very detailed and followed correctly. All staff, governors and volunteers have undertaken relevant training to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All adults in school work effectively as a team to establish clear expectations and routines from the time that pupils join Reception. Consequently, pupils conduct themselves well in class, when moving around the school, socialising in play areas and having lunch.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their conduct and behaviour around the school is good. They are considerate and respectful towards each other. Pupils enjoy being able to play on the field, climb on the outside equipment and play in the early years outside area.
- Pupils quickly develop positive attitudes to learning and relate well to teachers and teaching assistants. In classes, there is a calm and orderly atmosphere for learning.
- From the start, pupils are encouraged to follow the school's five golden rules. They take turns in answering questions in class and work well in pairs or groups. Very occasionally, pupils become disengaged in class when work is not quite matched to their need or the pace of learning slackens.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Very soon after his appointment in September 2014, the new headteacher along with his senior leaders quickly recognised that pupils were not achieving as well as they could in all national assessments. An urgent programme was introduced to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement throughout the school.
- As a result, there has been significant improvement in pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 particularly in writing and mathematics at the expected level and in all subjects at the higher level. It was more variable at the end of Key Stage 1 last year.
- Although there has been a steady improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) by the end of Year 1, outcomes have remained below the national standard. The teaching of phonics and reading has been a key area for improvement during this academic year. This has led to significant improvements.

- Pupils of different ages read well and use their basic literacy skills to work out unfamiliar words and what they mean. Pupils enjoy reading at school and at home; older pupils understand the benefits of reading competently, both to gain knowledge and to help develop writing skills, preparing them for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' work and the school's accurate records point to substantial improvement in both pupils' attainment and their rates of progress throughout the school this year. The improving trend since the new headteacher took up appointment is continuing. Most pupils now make the progress they should in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics because of improved teaching and greater rigour in monitoring pupils' progress. However, the school is aware that outcomes are not yet outstanding because still more pupils could make better than expected progress.
- Where pupils have lower starting points, or are at risk of falling behind, timely and effective support is generally provided. Regular pupil progress meetings enable leaders to discuss with teachers each pupil's progress. Together, they identify and implement suitable programmes of support for those who need additional help. Leaders have improved outcomes for the most able but recognise opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge them further.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability now make good progress due to the much-improved additional support they receive. Disadvantaged pupils also make good progress and the gaps between them and other pupils are narrowing significantly.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6 to go to secondary school, they have the skills necessary to make a success of the next stage of their education. They read fluently, their comprehension is good and they can write at length for a variety of audiences.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years is well led. The leader is clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the provision.
- Induction processes are effective and these cultivate positive relationships between parents and staff. Parents are encouraged to share their child's strengths and abilities during home and induction visits. Improving relationships are being established with the private on-site nursery provider.
- Pupils settle quickly into the Reception class because routines and positive relationships are swiftly established. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress from their various starting points. There are currently no pupils eligible for additional funding.
- In recent years, pupils have entered Reception with skills typically below those expected for their age. This is due in the main to the very high number of summer-born pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has declined year on year since the last inspection and outcomes in 2015 were below those found nationally. Leaders have responded with urgency to address this and current information shows that an increasing proportion are ready to start Year 1 as confident learners this year.
- Staff assess the children's current levels of learning and needs thoroughly, clearly and accurately, from an early stage. They use what they find out to devise meaningful tasks for pupils. The electronic assessment record provides effective communication with parents.
- Pupils are motivated by a wide range of resources. These stimulate their interests and allow them to explore their ideas. For instance, pupils enjoy cutting and tasting different vegetables. Independent learning is promoted through a range of self-selected activities but opportunities to write during this time do not always challenge pupils to think more deeply. For instance, boys' fascination for 'Star Wars' characters is not harnessed or developed effectively.
- Adults support pupils well in their learning and their personal development. They look after pupils well and offer warm encouragement to promote good learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their skills of independence from an early stage and most sustain their concentration well, but there are some occasions when boys flit from one activity to another and do not maintain their concentration for a sustained period of time to complete an activity.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. They are able to share and take turns. Pupils generally behave well but occasionally some boisterous behaviour exhibited by a handful of boys is not challenged swiftly enough. Pupils understand the safety routines, for example by washing their hands before eating.
- The school leaders check rigorously that all possible steps are taken to ensure that the children are safeguarded.

School details

Unique reference number	133732
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10001816

This inspection 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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Warbiss
Headteacher	Brian Gwynne
Telephone number	01604 714223
Website	www.kingsthorpevps.co.uk
Email address	head@kvps.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2013

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than averaged-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to looked-after children and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs support and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan are below 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.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection. Since September 2014, the new headteacher, chair of governors and other senior leaders have taken up their posts.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- A private nursery provider is located on the school site which operates independently of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 12 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to observe learning and small-group activities at other times.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 79 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They took account of one response that was sent directly to Ofsted. Inspectors also talked with parents at the start and end of the school day and at parents' meetings.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information; and health and safety documentation.
- The questionnaires completed by 13 members of staff and 12 pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Paul Weston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Atkins

Ofsted Inspector

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