

Kingsthorne Primary School

Cranbourne Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham, West Midlands B44 0BX

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

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

- Strong leadership at all levels has underpinned improvements since the last inspection. Middle leaders are now effective in their work to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Teaching is typically good. This is because adults, including teaching assistants, provide effective support that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Governors have a strong moral purpose and effectively support leaders in their vision to continue to improve standards. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide strong levels of support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The early years provides a safe and welcoming start to school life and enables children to thrive. The well-planned provision and the focus on well-being support children in making strong progress from often low starting points.
- The school spends additional money wisely for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress and catch up well.
- Parents have an overwhelmingly positive opinion about the school's leadership and the quality of teaching.
- The school has developed the curriculum in line with national changes. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to be done to promote pupils' artistic learning across the school.
- Although teaching is consistently effective, occasionally pupils are not suitably challenged. As a result, not enough pupils reach the standard of which they are capable.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in different situations. They feel very secure in school because they know that members of staff care for them and will look after them well.
- Pupils behave well as a result of teachers' high expectations. They are polite and respectful.
- Reading and phonics are now taught effectively. However, pupils still need to develop their spelling skills when writing. Presentation and handwriting skills also need further improvement.
- Despite marked improvements in teaching, there is still a small amount of weaker teaching in mathematics.
- The safeguarding of pupils is a high priority. The support for the most vulnerable pupils and their families is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged with work appropriate to their abilities so that they always achieve the best they can
 - ensuring that all pupils have the knowledge and skills to be able to spell words accurately
 - insisting that all pupils use neat handwriting and good presentation consistently across the curriculum.
- Improve leadership and management further by:
 - reviewing and planning curriculum provision to ensure that all pupils receive a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum
 - ensuring that some weaker teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is eradicated.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders, including governors, has led the school effectively through a period of change. The school has significantly improved, despite facing the challenges of high pupil mobility and key changes to staffing.
- The senior leadership team evaluates the school's effectiveness accurately. Their precise and thorough checks on the progress of pupils are used skilfully to decide the next steps in the plans for improvement. They identify measures of success for particular groups of pupils and use the thorough information they collect about pupils' outcomes to full effect.
- The performance management process is highly effective and supports the development of all staff. Targets are set with a focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Training for staff is well targeted and supports them to improve their practice, as evidenced by recent high-quality instruction on effective questioning.
- The curriculum engages pupils well, broadens their knowledge and helps them to make progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional activities, such as educational visits, special themed days and clubs and sporting activities, including links with Aston Villa Football Club, provide pupils with positive experiences. On occasion, the teaching of artistic learning lacks depth. Leaders are aware of this and have recently put plans in place to rectify this, for example with the appointment of a specialist music teacher.
- Staff morale is high. Overwhelmingly, staff are of the opinion that the school has improved since the last inspection and they are proud to work at this school. As one member of staff put it, 'every day is both a privilege and a reward'.
- Special educational needs funding is well managed by a skilful leader. She is effective in ensuring that the work of additional adults to support weaker learners is leading to consistently good progress for these pupils.
- Leaders and governors have used the primary sport funding effectively and concentrated much of the funding on enhancing the expertise of teachers to teach physical education. Leaders have also used the additional funding to broaden the range of extra-curricular sports club available to pupils, with new clubs including Nerf Gun and archery for the older pupils.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been spent well. These pupils make good progress from their starting points. The most able disadvantaged pupils are making better progress in the current school year than in the past as a result of sharper checks on their learning and improvements in teachers' skills.
- Leaders are ambitious to raise pupils' achievements further. However, strategies to fully develop pupils' spelling skills have not yet been successful. The presentation of work and pupils' handwriting are not yet good.

- The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the school. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to others. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'this is a fantastic school where everyone goes above and beyond to make sure the children get the very best. Kingsthorne is like one big happy family.'
- The school has received helpful support and challenge from the Birmingham Education Partnership. The school also liaises with a number of neighbouring schools with regard to standards and checking the quality and accuracy of assessment.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well established. Displays capture the school's key values of integrity, independence, positive attitudes, commitment and teamwork. Leaders use their house-point system to embed the values of community and partnership among pupils. Consequently, pupils say that the school is a place where it is safe to be different and that staff help you to understand and appreciate everyone around you.

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate about their role in school improvement. They are ambitious for the school to be one that provides strong teaching, an engaging curriculum and opportunities for outstanding pupil outcomes in a safe and secure environment. They have an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governance of the school has strengthened considerably since the previous inspection. Governors have shown a willingness to learn, not least from the review of governance they commissioned. As a result, governors are well trained, confident in their roles and determined to improve the quality of education that will lead to even better outcomes for pupils.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively, including those related to safeguarding. They possess a wide range of skills which enable them to interpret information about pupils' outcomes accurately and with good insight. They ask questions which probe and challenge school leaders well and document such challenge clearly.
- Governors do not shy away from making difficult decisions. For example, they have ensured that the school's performance management arrangements only reward successful outcomes and leaders apply these rigorously.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that robust policies are in place and they are lived out through a culture of safeguarding. Staff make every effort to ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are of the utmost priority.
- The caring and nurturing culture which leaders have created ensures that pupils feel that staff are approachable. They have confidence in the school and believe it to be a safe environment. Staff know individual pupils and their families well, and have close

and effective links with external agencies.

- All staff are aware of their duties and receive regular training and updates. Staff know what to do if they believe a pupil may be at risk of harm. There is a clear system of induction for new staff.
- Parents recognise that the school places a high priority on maintaining pupils' safety and well-being. Parent View responses confirm that parents feel that their children are safe in school.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe online. E-safety is taught regularly and older pupils could explain why it is important not to reveal personal information online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The high expectations of the leadership team have resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment across the school. These raised expectations are confirmed by the work in books, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and the school's own regular checks on the quality of teaching.
- Teachers work together to check that pupils' work is assessed accurately, both within their school and through working with other schools nearby. Leaders use their regular assessment reviews to provide them with information about where pupils are falling behind or need to catch up, and intervene swiftly.
- Additional adults provide effective support to different groups of pupils. They use questioning well to check pupils' learning. Inspectors witnessed this practice in a range of learning episodes, including in science, mathematics and literacy.
- Teachers have developed very positive relationships with pupils, based on a good knowledge of pupils' individual strengths and interests. Classrooms and shared areas are calm and friendly places where pupils can be seen enjoying their learning experiences. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were eager to discuss with their partner what plants need to grow. In Year 6, pupils refined their basketball passing manoeuvres successfully and with obvious pleasure.
- Reading is now taught well. The school's focus on phonics ensures that all pupils who start the school in Reception can read at age expectation by the end of Year 2. Pupils read a wide range of books confidently to inspectors and most were adept at decoding unknown words. Pupils also are developing a love of books and many say that they use the local library to find more books that interest them.
- Writing is taught effectively and creative ideas capture pupils' enthusiasm and ability to write imaginatively, particularly in key stage 1. While there are comprehensive plans in place to improve spelling and handwriting, teaching is not fully effective in ensuring that pupils have security in using these skills.
- Teachers provide prompt and skilful guidance to ensure that pupils build on their mathematical understanding. Pupils' books show that most make good progress in using and applying their skills and explaining how they came to an answer to a calculation. On occasion, however, some teachers in key stage 2 do not help pupils quickly enough when they become confused by a particular concept.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive additional, closely targeted support agreed by the special needs team.
- Additional support is also provided for disadvantaged pupils and is coordinated by the leader who has responsibility for pupils' progress.
- Homework activities link carefully to pupils' learning in class. Teachers motivate pupils with incentives of praise and small rewards for completing activities, including the privilege of sitting on a chair in assembly for older pupils. Pupils speak confidently about homework and enjoy the competitions designed to boost the amount of reading they do away from school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides older pupils with opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as prefects, house captains and play leaders. This makes an important contribution to their maturity and prepares them well to transfer to secondary school when the time comes. A good example of the way the school works to promote pupils' personal development was their involvement in the redesign of the playground. Pupils were involved in every stage of the project and even managed to negotiate a discount from the manufacturer.
- The atmosphere throughout the school is calm, friendly and exciting. Pupils care for each other and are courteous and polite to others. They respond positively in class and most pupils understand how to be a successful learner. As one child put it, 'Positive thinking will always help me to do everything better than negative thinking ever will.'
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is and why it is unacceptable. They say that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by staff when it does occur. Pupils are taught about the threats posed by social media and they are able to explain what they would do if they became aware of cyber bullying.
- The overwhelming majority of staff and parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey and contributed towards the free text service during the inspection agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for at this school. One parent spoke for many in saying, 'the staff are warm and welcoming and create a wonderful environment for my child to be in.'
- The daily breakfast club provides a calm and welcoming start to the day. Pupils enjoy a nourishing breakfast and integrate freely with pupils of all ages.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and in assemblies. Inspectors observed all pupils listening attentively and with reverence to an assembly about a non-Christian religion.
- From an early age, pupils clearly show that they want to please their teachers and learn effectively. Pupils work well together and willingly share ideas.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were clear about what makes a balanced diet

and the benefits of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables. The school offers a range of sporting opportunities led by sports specialists, both during and after school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good and are confident that teachers will sort out problems should they arise.
- Highly effective behaviour management by all staff means that pupils behave consistently well in lessons. This has had a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and the progress they make. Pupils also behave well around the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well-supervised occasions which ensure that pupils can play and socialise happily together.
- The school's behaviour system supports pupils in making the right choices. Only a very small number of pupils repeat the same poor behaviours. Analysis of behaviour logs demonstrates clear improvement, with the number of incidents reducing over time.
- Pupils respect their learning environment. Displays are well maintained, stimulating and attractive.
- Rates of attendance for all pupils and for certain groups were below national averages in 2016. Current attendance rates for pupils exceed national averages and leaders are aware of the need to maintain this improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school's current tracking information and the work in books show that pupils' achievement is good.
- Outcomes for pupils have fluctuated over recent years but are now improving. In 2015 and 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress across all key stages is currently strong.
- School outcomes are affected by exceptionally high rates of pupil mobility. Leaders are aware of this and implement a variety of strategies to ensure that new arrivals make rapid progress. Although high mobility means that school averages are sometimes adversely affected in comparison with national averages, leaders and teachers warmly welcome all new arrivals and do everything possible to accelerate these pupils' progress.
- In Year 1, pupils achieve well in phonics. Pupils develop a good understanding of phonics because this is taught well, right from Nursery and Reception. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been broadly in line with the national average for the last three years. This represents strong progress, given pupils' different starting points.
- Pupils make strong rates of progress throughout key stage 1 and reach levels of attainment broadly in line with those found nationally. In 2016, the proportion of pupils

who achieved at a greater depth by the end of key stage 1 was higher than the national average in reading and writing. Most pupils who join the school in Nursery achieve at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.

- Current school assessment information for key stage 2 shows that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rapidly improving. In 2016, Year 6 pupils who had attended the school since Nursery made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, these pupils were well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils new to the school also achieve the very best they can.
- There is a strong culture of reading in the school, one in which pupils participate keenly. Not only are outcomes in reading improving but pupils enjoy using the two school libraries and participating in house competitions focusing on particular books. Pupils who read to the inspector did so with fluency and enthusiasm.
- Handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work in literacy books are not yet good. Pupils' ability to spell words is currently receiving increased emphasis, but also remains an aspect of pupils' writing that is still not good enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress over their time in school from their low starting points, due to the excellent support and strategies in place. There is still a difference in attainment compared with other pupils nationally, but this is diminishing.
- The majority of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in most areas of learning. This is because of the effective support these pupils receive.
- Academic outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good, as a result of effective teaching which meets their needs.
- Most of the time, the most able pupils make good or better progress because teachers question them closely to deepen their understanding, while challenging thinking skills. Occasionally, the level of challenge is too complex and not aligned to pupils' understanding so they are not able to complete the tasks correctly. At other times, this group is not sufficiently challenged.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils typically make good progress in a range of subjects other than literacy and numeracy, including science, history and religious education. Science work scrutinised by inspectors showed that older pupils are well prepared for undertaking scientific investigations when they join Year 7.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is strong. Highly skilled early years teachers and teaching assistants know the starting points for each child and make sure that activities focus on challenging them to achieve the next step.
- The early years provide a wealth of opportunities for children to explore, engage in and enjoy. Areas of learning, indoors and outdoors, are well organised and inviting. They give opportunities for children to lead their own investigations through practical, first-

hand experiences. Children were captivated by the way ink changed the colour of a flower, while others were enthralled when investigating classroom metals with their magnets. Children also explored the artwork of Kandinsky, Monet, Warhol and Goldsworthy and a group of children were delighted to cook their own pizzas.

- Children enter the early years with skills that are much lower than are typical for their age. Through rigorous and accurate assessment, leaders quickly identify the children's needs and develop appropriate learning experiences for them. Consequently, children make very good progress from their starting points. The number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing over time and is close to the national average.
- The additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support to disadvantaged children. As a result, they make the same good progress as other children nationally.
- Staff create a purposeful environment where children develop good personal and social skills, grow in confidence and are happy. Children were keen to show inspectors their literacy work and 'time to write' stickers. They were particularly pleased to share the foods they had written for their tea party, including 'froot', 'sosijrol' and 'peesas'. Other pupils were keen to share their writing about heroes including 'sooperman'.
- Both the indoor and outside areas promote reading, writing and mathematics successfully. Children are confident in testing out their basic skills, especially language, as the setting has a strong focus on phonics and writing skills.
- Children's welfare is ensured through careful checks on their safety and well-trained staff who have a clear understanding of policies and agreed practices.
- Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. They are invited into Reception to share in their children's learning. Parents are pleased with how quickly their children settle into the school.
- Children are well behaved and respond well to teachers' high expectations. Children are considerate and share well with each other. Staff intervene where necessary to support children to make the right choices. Consequently, children build positive relationships with one another and with the adults around them.
- Both Nursery and Reception work effectively together to ensure that transition for the youngest children in the school between the early years and into Year 1 is effective. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	103368
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10025173

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Meacheam
Headteacher	Joanne Loach
Telephone number	0121 675 3897
Website	www.kingsthorneprimary.co.uk/
Email address	enquiry@kingsthorne.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Kingsthorne Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who require special educational needs support is below the national average.
- The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- Pupil mobility is very high across all key stages and well above the national average.

- The early years consists of a part-time Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club. This provision is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in parts of 33 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons as part of learning walks throughout the school.
- Inspectors observed other aspects of the school day, including before-school provision, small group sessions, lesson changeovers, breaktimes, lunchtimes, after-school clubs and the start and the end of the school day. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Various discussions were held with senior leaders, phase and curriculum leaders, staff, pupils and children, parents, members of the governing body, a representative from the Birmingham Education Partnership and a school improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the performance management of teachers, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance, external reports, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation information and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading, looked at pupils' books and scrutinised the school's information showing pupils' current progress and attainment in all year groups. Inspectors also scrutinised books belonging to specific groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and new arrivals to the school.
- The views of pupils and children were gathered by inspectors speaking to them in lessons, at breaktimes and in small group meetings.
- The views of parents were gathered from 12 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed responses to survey questionnaires from 25 members of staff and 21 pupils.

Inspection team

Alan Prince, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Potter	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Roalfe	Ofsted Inspector

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