

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE KINGSHILL COMBINED SCHOOL

Great Missenden,

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110244

Headteacher: Mrs J Hall

Reporting inspector: Mr. John Francis
17976

Dates of inspection: 26th – 27th March 2001

Inspection number: 192118

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Windsor Lane Little Kingshill Great Missenden Bucks.
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body of Little Kingshill Combined School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Campbell-Waite
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Kingshill Combined School is in the village of Little Kingshill, but takes a significant number of pupils from the surrounding area. This is one of mainly privately owned housing, with a much higher than average proportion of children from higher social class households. There are no pupils eligible for a free school meal, and children's attainment on entry to the school is above average. There are 272 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11, with 49 in the Foundation Stage, including 47 children attending the Nursery and Reception class part-time. This is bigger than most schools but there are fewer pupils than at the time of the previous inspection, with the loss of Year 7. There are 30 pupils on the register of special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties, and one pupil with a statement of special educational needs: this is below the national average. There are two pupils from minority ethnic groups, but with English as their first language. There has been a significant change of teaching staff over the last two years, with only three of the current staff in post at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Kingshill is a very good school. It is led well by the headteacher and senior staff, supported by an increasingly knowledgeable governing body. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' high expectations, combined with pupils' very good attitudes, result in good progress over time. Pupils work hard, and work well together. By the time pupils are 11, standards in English are very high, and standards in mathematics are well above the average for similar schools. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is very good and pupils make very good progress.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction to the work of the school.
- Relationships throughout the school are good; pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The provision of outdoor accommodation and resources for children in the Reception class.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in January 1997, there have been a number of significant changes. The school no longer has a Year 7, and all but three of the staff have been appointed over the last two years. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed well, and the school has continued to improve and develop. Standards are improving in line with the national trend, and the school is on course to meet its targets. The greatest improvement is in the quality of teaching. In 1997, although half of the teaching observed was of good quality, one lesson in eight was judged to be unsatisfactory. In this inspection, all of the teaching observed was good or very good. Standards in information and communication technology, however, have not kept pace with improvements nationally. The relatively low number of computers, and lack of appropriate software, prevent the school from meeting all of the statutory requirements for the subject. However, the computer suite currently being developed will provide good quality facilities, and the opportunity for teachers to teach the necessary skills more effectively. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A*	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	A	B	C

Key

Very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results from national tests in 2000 show standards of attainment for pupils in Year 6 to be above, or well above, the national average. Attainment in English is very high, and in the top five per cent of schools nationally. This has been fairly consistent over the last three years, but the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels by the age of 11 has improved since 1997. In English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 is twice the national average. The school is on course to achieve its targets for 2001. Current work in pupils' books shows good progress and continuing high standards, not only in English, mathematics and science, but also in all other subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology. For pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, (seven-year-olds), standards remain high and well above the national average for pupils of this age. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and exceed the Early Learning Goals for pupils on entry to Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and work. They are keen to learn, concentrate well, and give their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school generally. Pupils show very good self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good; they play and work well together. They have a good understanding of the reaction of others, and what makes them happy or sad. Older pupils have responsibilities, which help with the smooth running of the school.
Attendance	This is very good, and well above the national average.

Staff provide a good role model for pupils, and pupils play an active role in maintaining good relationships. There is particularly good interaction between children in the Nursery, where they share willingly and wait patiently for their turn where necessary.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

All the teaching observed was of at least good quality, and a third of it was very good. It is consistent throughout the school from Nursery to Year 6. This is a significant improvement on the teaching seen at the time of the last inspection, and shows the way in which good planning by teachers, and the high expectations of the headteacher, ensure consistency, even with the relatively large number of part-time teachers in the school. The teaching of English and mathematics, including teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons, is of high quality. In mathematics, pupils' thinking is regularly challenged, and there are many opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts through the wide range of problems and investigations set for them. The teaching of reading and writing is very good, and is done effectively throughout the school. Teachers plan well, are very clear about what they want pupils to learn, and share these objectives with the pupils. Pupils' learning is good. Lessons have a brisk pace, and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are increasingly involving pupils in their own assessment. Pupils respond to this well, and their commitment to their own learning is clearly seen in the consistently high standards achieved across all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It is broad and relevant, and caters effectively for all pupils. The requirements to teach all aspects of information and communication technology are not being met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good support is provided for these pupils, and their needs are addressed very effectively through careful planning, which accurately matches the work to their previous learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils are taught to value each other, and the expectations for good behaviour are high. Assemblies have a good moral and spiritual content, enabling pupils to gain in understanding of their responsibilities and the wonders of the world. There is an extensive range of visits to develop pupils' cultural understanding and knowledge, and music lessons enhance this development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school demonstrates a caring approach to all of its work, and the arrangements for looking after pupils' welfare are good. This is seen through pupils' attitudes and good relationships. All staff provides a good role model for pupils in their manner and approach. Assessment is used effectively to target areas for improvement.

The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences for pupils, and a good range of in-school, and extracurricular, activities enhance pupils' development. The weaknesses in information and communication technology are being addressed. The computer suite, and additional software currently on order will enable the school to meet National Curriculum requirements and allow all the aspects of the subject to be taught.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership, and is responsible for the clear direction of the school and the focus on increasingly high standards. Good support is provided by the deputy headteacher, who also provides a very good model of teaching for other staff. The quality of teaching, planning, and pupils' attainment are all monitored as part of the school's commitment to improvement. There is a development programme in place for co-ordinators, many of whom are relatively new to their role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very interested in, and committed to, the school's continuing development. While some are relatively new to this role, they have a good knowledge of the work of the school and standards, and many are actively involved in the work of the school through links with subjects and co-ordinators.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are systems in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work. Attainment data is carefully analysed and used to set even more challenging targets. The school's development plan has a clear, long-term strategy, although some of the evaluation criteria are not always sufficiently detailed to give a clear measure of success.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of all staff and resources. The school's budget is closely linked to the priorities of the school's development plan. Funds provided through specific grants are used well. Appropriate consideration is given when making spending decisions to ensure the school achieves best value for money.

Accommodation is used well, although the lack of an outdoor area, and appropriate outdoor equipment for the Reception class, limit aspects of their physical and social development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress. • Their children like school. • Pupils' good behaviour. • The good quality of the teaching. • They feel that the school is approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about their children's progress. • The school working more closely with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The parents' positive views are supported by the findings of the inspection. However, the inspection team considers that the range of activities outside lessons is appropriate, and that the school is trying to work more closely with parents, and keep them better informed. There are regular newsletters, and many parents are involved directly in school, supporting teachers during lessons. The parents' association, is very active, and provides valuable additional support to the school. Where there is a weakness is in the opportunities that parents have for more informal meetings with some of the part-time staff, for example, at the start of the day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are high and pupils achieve well

1. In the core subjects of English and mathematics, test results over the last three years have shown consistently high attainment at the end of both Key Stage 1 (seven-year-olds), and Key Stage 2 (11-year-olds). However, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels by the age of 11 has improved since 1997. National tests in 2000 show standards of attainment for pupils in Year 6 to be above or well above the national average. Attainment in English is very high and is in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Standards in science, although above the national average, are only in line with those of similar schools. This is because of the relatively smaller number of pupils who attain the higher level 5, which although above average is not as high as in English and mathematics. In English and mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 is twice the national average.
2. Children start school with well-developed skills in speaking and listening. This is further enhanced by teachers' good questioning that develops and extends pupils' answers. Pupils are confident speakers, and use a wide vocabulary. Most offer comments or answer questions during lessons, and listen carefully to the answers of others. The skills they show in speaking, such as good sentence construction, carry through into their written work. By 11, this shows a maturity of style and pupils use a wide range of writing devices that bring interest and good structure to their work.
3. Pupils come into school with an interest in books. As they progress through the school, this is built on effectively and pupils read well and enjoy books. Work seen in literacy lessons is successfully developing pupils' skills to enable them to discuss and explain the content of their books. They have good skills that allow them to make the best of their reading. Pupils read both for pleasure, and to find information for work in other subjects.
4. By the time they are 11, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well above average. This is as a result of very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers have a good mathematical knowledge, and a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. The quality of teachers' questions, and the use of accurate mathematical vocabulary, are important factors in improving pupils' understanding. The openness of many of the tasks, and the investigations that flow from them, allow pupils to develop their mathematical thinking and devise their own strategies for solving problems.
5. In science, pupils show good subject knowledge, and their books contain many examples of investigative and experimental science, and links to other areas of the curriculum; for example, graph work linking with mathematical understanding. For the older pupils in Key Stage 1, however, too much of the work is based around worksheets, completed by all pupils regardless of their previous attainment. Many of these require little from the pupils beyond filling in boxes. This prevents the teacher from having a clear view of their understanding, and although standards are above average, the individual response from pupils is not sufficient for them to reach their full potential.
6. Current work in pupils' books shows good progress and continuing high standards, not only in English, mathematics and science, but also in all other subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology. Although pupils demonstrate many well-developed skills in aspects such as word processing, there are not the resources to teach the full range of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology. However, the new computer suite, and the improved range of software will allow all of these weaknesses to be addressed.

The quality of teaching is very good

7. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. At that time, although half of the teaching was good or very good, one lesson in eight was unsatisfactory. During this inspection, all the teaching observed was of at least good quality, and a third of it was very good. It is consistent throughout the school from Nursery to Year 6. Much of this is due to good planning by teachers, and the high expectations of the headteacher, which ensure consistency, even with the relatively large number of part-time teachers in the school. Teachers plan together well in year groups, are very clear about what they want pupils to learn, and share these objectives with the pupils. These learning objectives are referred to at the end of lessons to judge the progress pupils have made. The introductions to lessons are used effectively, and the plenary sessions at the end of lessons are generally done well. Lessons have a brisk pace, and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The accurate use of vocabulary by the teacher and pupils in a Year 6 English lesson on constructing effective arguments, and the work following, demonstrated this perfectly. The pupils understood that the opening statement must define the argument, and that it was important to use precise language. Pupils respond well to this high quality teaching, and get through a significant amount of work in lessons. Their commitment to their own learning is clearly seen in the consistently high standards achieved across all subjects. Pupils are being increasingly more involved in their own assessment.
8. The teaching of English and mathematics, including teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons, is of high quality. In mathematics, pupils' thinking is regularly challenged, and there are many opportunities for them to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts through the wide range of problems and investigations set for them. A Year 5 mathematics lessons demonstrated this very effectively. Pupils worked well with a partner and for the plenary session at the end of the lesson the pairs presented their own number problems for others to work out. With the range of problems set, not only did this demonstrate their own understanding of the task, but it also acted as a valuable check for the teacher on the level of understanding of the rest of the class. The additional teaching groups for English and mathematics each morning have a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. The use of small groups or pairs working together is an effective feature of many lessons, not only in English and mathematics. The teaching of reading and writing is very good, and is done effectively throughout the school. The many parents who give their time at the beginning of the school day to hear pupils read provide valuable additional support.
9. The quality of teaching in the Foundation classes of Nursery and Reception is very good, and through a wide range of worthwhile experiences, gives children the best possible start to their school life. The teachers and support staff have a very good knowledge of what children of this age and ability need to learn and develop.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction to the work of the school

10. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and is responsible for the clear direction of the school and the focus on increasingly high standards. With the support of the senior staff and governors, she is continuing to develop the school and maintain the positive ethos that is found in all its work. The quality of teaching, planning, and pupils' attainment is monitored by the headteacher and senior staff as part of the school's commitment to improvement. The analysis of test and assessment data is used well to guide the work of the school. There is a clear focus on high expectations, and co-ordinators are developing their role in supporting this. A development programme is in place for co-ordinators, many of whom are relatively new to their role. Good support for the headteacher, and other teaching staff, is provided by the deputy headteacher, who is also a very good model of teaching.

Relationships throughout the school are good; pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well

11. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They show high levels of self-discipline. Parents are rightly pleased with the very good attitudes and behaviour, and feel that this is part of the high expectations that the school has for all its pupils. From the Nursery to Year 6, the expectations for good social behaviour are high. Pupils listen to each other's views, work co-operatively and share tasks fairly. This is particularly impressive in the Nursery class, where the youngest pupils in school share willingly and wait patiently for their turn where necessary.
12. Staff provides a good role model for pupils, and pupils play an active role in maintaining good relationships. Older pupils have responsibilities around school, and carry these out willingly and with a sense of duty. The spiritual and moral content of assemblies helps to strengthen the feeling of community in the school. The school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible citizens and is preparing them well for life beyond school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in information and communication technology

13. Since the previous inspection, the demands of the curriculum for information and communication technology have increased significantly. The school has not been able to respond to these sufficiently because of the relatively low number of computers in the school, their age, and the lack of appropriate software programs for many aspects of the curriculum; for example, monitoring and sensing. The school has been relatively successful considering the limitations placed upon it by the equipment. There is evidence in classrooms of pupils using information and communication technology in many areas of the curriculum. There are good displays of pupils' writing using a word processor, or displays showing data handling in mathematics. Pupils' basic skills in using computers are good, and for many pupils, this is supported by work they do at home.
14. The soon-to-be-installed computer suite is planned to enable the school to address these shortcomings. The adoption of national guidelines for teaching information and communication technology is providing a structure for teaching skills as pupils move through the school. The co-ordinator's own level of skill is high, and she has planned well for the further development of information and communication technology as the new computer suite comes into use. Staff's own level of knowledge is sound, but they are continuing to work to improve their own level of skill, and further training is being provided for all teachers.

The provision of outdoor accommodation and resources for children in the Reception class

15. Although children in the Nursery have their own secure and well equipped area for outdoor play, the Reception children in the main school do not have this available to them. This limits some aspects of their social and physical development, and makes it more difficult for the school to teach all of the elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum to the necessary level. Although children do experience good quality physical education as part of their teaching programme, without this provision they cannot have the necessary free access to the opportunities offered by more unstructured play.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

16. The school should now:

- (1) improve standards in information and communication technology throughout the school by providing the necessary resources to allow the full National Curriculum to be taught; *
- (2) improve the outdoor provision for Reception children by providing better facilities for outdoor play in a secure, designated area.

** This has already been recognised by the school and appears in its action plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	35	65	0	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	252
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	30

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	15	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	35	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	36	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (97)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	22	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	21
	Girls	22	20	22
	Total	44	41	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (92)	93 (96)	98 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	19	21
	Girls	22	19	21
	Total	42	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	95 (96)	86 (98)	95 (98)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	222
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Year 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Year 6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	471,406
Total expenditure	474,958
Expenditure per pupil	1,679
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,114
Balance carried forward to next year	51,666

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	272
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	51	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	57	5	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	55	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	52	3	2	2
The teaching is good.	55	38	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	42	23	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	43	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	45	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	42	18	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	35	49	12	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	51	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	18	6	9

Other comments:

At the parents' meeting, and in some written responses, a few parents felt that the mixed age classes made it more difficult for pupils to learn, and that movement between the sets for literacy sometimes undermined pupils' confidence.

Some concerns were also expressed about the relatively few midday supervisors on duty at lunchtime.