

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGS MEADOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ainsdale

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104886

Headteacher: Mrs A Watson

Reporting inspector: Dr B Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th October 2000

Inspection number: 224954

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Meadow Lane
Ainsdale
Southport

Postcode: PR8 2PE

Telephone number: (01704) 578512

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Krishnan

Date of previous inspection: 17th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kings Meadow School is a gem of a school. It is a community Junior and Infant Primary School, with a nursery and a resourced speech and language base, situated on a council estate in Ainsdale, Southport. The number on roll is 132 including 28 in the Nursery. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average for pupils aged eleven. The number of pupils aged eleven taking the national tests in 1999 and 2000 has been too small to make national comparisons. Nonetheless, results in these two years have been significantly higher than the school's results in the previous two years. The overall quality of teaching is very good. Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average for pupils aged eleven.
- The leadership and management of the school are excellent; the school reflects the dedication of the headteacher in all areas.
- The overall quality of the teaching is very good; assessment procedures are excellent.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good; relationships and pupils' personal development are also very good throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils under five in the school's Early Years Education Centre is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, both in the resourced speech and language base and elsewhere in the school, is very good.
- Links with parents are excellent; the "parents as educators" courses run in the school are having a big impact on pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Attainment in information and communication technology, whilst improving, could improve further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. The school's improvement since that inspection has been very good. The key issue to improve the standard of pupils' written work has been appropriately addressed and procedures have been agreed for the presentation and marking of pupils' work. Appropriate schemes of work have been produced. The key issue to build upon the positive attitudes and team spirit in the school has been achieved. An issue to initiate systems for evaluating the effectiveness of expenditure has been addressed well. Parents are now appropriately informed about the school's performance. Suitable attention has been given to discouraging the public use of the playing fields. There has been a considerable improvement in the standard of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	#	#	#
mathematics	D	#	#	#
science	B	#	#	#

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The upward trend in the school's results for English, mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven, is above the national trend.

Note: in 1998 and 1999, there were less than 10 pupils in the cohort, making the data unreliable when compared with schools nationally or with similar schools. Results in 1999 were considerably better than in 1997 and 1998. Provisional results for 2000 show further improvement in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was well above average in reading, broadly in line with national averages in writing and above average in mathematics. Taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 averaged together, pupils' attainment in reading was in line with the national average. In writing it was well below the national average and in mathematics it was just below average. Results for the year 2000 show a considerable improvement on those for previous years.

The school's targets are suitably ambitious and are on course to be met.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Some particularly good work in these subjects was seen in the current Year 5 class. Standards in information and communication technology, whilst improving, are still not high enough by the end of both key stages.

Overall standards at this school are high and are improving.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are enthusiastic, interested and confident.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Adults and pupils get on very well with one another. All contribute to the very good atmosphere at the school, whatever their role.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is very good. The rate of unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

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.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good throughout the school. A particular strength is the school's use of assessment throughout, which is excellent. Teachers' management of pupils is very good in all areas, as is teachers' knowledge and understanding. Teachers work very hard for their pupils and teach them in a consistently professional way.

The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well throughout the school, with very good contributions to these areas from subjects across the curriculum, such as history. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well.

The percentage of good or better teaching seen was 100 per cent; very good or better teaching was 88 per cent and unsatisfactory or worse teaching was zero per cent. Indeed, no lessons were observed where the teaching was merely satisfactory. In every lesson, it was at least good. Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their interest, concentration and independence which are very good and their effort which is also very good throughout the school. There are no particular weaknesses.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are very good and are enhanced by extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils' special educational needs both in the mainstream classes and in the resourced speech and language base, is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is good in all areas. Pupils' social development is enhanced with the inclusion of pupils from the language base into mainstream classes where appropriate.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils. Child protection procedures are very good. There are excellent procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and then using the results of these assessments to help to plan the curriculum. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are excellent.

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is excellent. The "parents as educators" courses are having a positive effect in raising attainment.

All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body are excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' fulfilment of their responsibilities is excellent.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very well.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is very good.

The headteacher is hard working and committed to raising standards; this is a school which is being steered very much in the right direction. The accommodation is very good and has significantly improved since the last inspection. It is very well maintained.

Particular strengths in leadership and management include the very effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance.

The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school has high expectations. • The school is well managed and led. • Teaching is good. • They are well informed about their child's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority of parents would like a greater range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Inspectors judge that the school's provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and improving further.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are above average for pupils aged eleven.

1. Inspection findings are that standards in English, mathematics and science are above national averages by the end of Key Stage 2 and also above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, there were only nine pupils aged eleven, which is a very small sample. This makes comparison of the results for those pupils with pupils nationally unreliable. Nonetheless, this particular group of pupils performed significantly better than pupils at the school have previously done. Bearing in mind that this is a very small sample, it is of interest to know that these pupils obtained marks that were in the top five per cent overall, when compared with schools of a similar type. Results for the year 2000 show further improvement in English and mathematics.
2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for seven year olds, there were enough pupils to make national comparisons more valid. Pupils' performance in reading was well above average, in writing it was average and in mathematics it was above average. Results for the year 2000 show further improvement.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1, current pupils read and write at an above average level overall. They produce accounts of what they have learned in other subjects such as history. Pupils who are currently starting Year 2 in the speech and language base spell their words either correctly or phonetically; in writing, their letters are generally correctly formed. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read fluently with expression. They understand key points and can re-tell the story of Cal's Log, for example. In shared reading, one Year 6 pupil commented that when the opening of a story is intriguing, "it makes you want to find out more". When re-writing the opening of a story, pupils are fully aware of the need to link reading, spelling and writing. Pupils aged eleven have successfully entered poems in a local writing competition on the theme of "Up, up and away".
4. In mathematics, Year 2 pupils use mental addition and subtraction appropriately to solve word problems involving money. They show appropriate understanding of place value in numbers approaching 1000. Pupils who are starting Year 6 recall their multiplication tables appropriately. They show good knowledge and understanding of key words connected to fractions. Pupils change improper fractions such as $\frac{17}{4}$ to the mixed number $4 \frac{1}{4}$ appropriately and also perform the reverse operation.
5. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have built up appropriate skills in scientific methods and have a good understanding of scientific vocabulary. Pupils in the mixed age Year 3 / 4 class can investigate springs and are aware that a force is a push or a pull. One girl was able to explain that a twist is also a force. These pupils generally produce well presented scientific diagrams of springs in various positions and label them. Pupils in Year 6 show good levels of attainment when investigating the term upthrust. They understand that when an object such as a balloon floats, its weight is balanced by the upthrust from the water. Pupils learned to their cost what happens when a balloon is forced below the level of water in a trough and then released quickly. The large volume of water that engulfed their clothes and workbooks is something that they will not forget! Pupils record their findings clearly.
6. Standards in other subjects, except information and communication technology, are at least in line with national standards. Corridors are enriched with many good diverse displays of pupils' work on themes such as Anne Boleyn, the life of The Beatles, Queen Victoria and alien pictures.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent; the school reflects the dedication of the headteacher in all areas.

7. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body are excellent. This school knows exactly where it is and where it wants to go. There is no complacency and a major aim is to give the best deal possible to all the pupils who pass through it. The educational direction is now excellent and results are improving. The school tracks its pupils very well in order to maximise their attainment. The leadership has put most effective systems in place to ensure that class teachers know exactly what needs to be done to help pupils achieve their best.
8. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored all teachers formally and have given them written feedback on any points for development. This is an on-going process that is now built into the life of the school. Self-evaluation is an effective feature of the school improvement plan. The reflection of the school's aims and values in the life of the school is excellent. The role of the curriculum coordinators has been effectively and sensibly developed.
9. The governing body is most committed to school improvement and encompasses a wide range of expertise. Their role in shaping the educational direction of the school is excellent. They have had the foresight to work with the headteacher in improving the accommodation of the school. They fully share the belief that they want to have a school that gives its children an excellent start. The governing body fulfils its requirement to act as a critical friend of the school. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities appropriately.

The overall quality of teaching is very good; assessment procedures are excellent.

10. The overall quality of teaching in the lessons seen was very good. It was very good for the under-fives, pupils in Key Stage 1 and those in Key Stage 2. Overall, every lesson seen in every class in the school was at least good. No lessons were merely satisfactory let alone unsatisfactory. Nearly nine lessons in every ten were very good or better. One Year 5 lesson was excellent.
11. Teachers expect their pupils to work hard. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson on the two times table, the teacher, having thoroughly covered the required knowledge to "twelve twos" stretched pupils by asking them 2×50 , 2×100 , 2×0 and so on. Such teaching inspires pupils to give their best. In another numeracy lesson for Year 3 / 4, the teacher set high expectations as he asked pupils to multiply "hard numbers" such as 32 by 10. When the inspector asked pupils questions such as 1000×10 , pupils did not hesitate to give the correct answer. Because of the teacher's expectations, pupils had no fear of "big" numbers.
12. Teachers in all classes manage their pupils very well. This means that the atmosphere in all classes is most conducive to learning; the teaching is such that the pupils want to learn. Despite pupils coming from a variety of backgrounds, the teachers have established successful relaxed routines that enable pupils to give their best. In an excellent Year 5 literacy lesson focusing on Oliver Twist, management of the pupils was excellent.
13. Assessment procedures are excellent. They are an integral part of the learning process. They are not bureaucratic and are having a big effect in raising standards. Sensibly, because the school has built up a very good set of lesson plans in previous years, these are not re-written each year but adapted appropriately. This gives teachers the time to concentrate on the assessment strategies which are clearly laid down for all. Teachers' marking is consistent through the school. Teachers give appropriate oral feedback to pupils on their numeracy and extended writing work in "conference" sessions, which occur each week on a rotational basis. Teachers regularly share with their pupils the learning objectives for a lesson and re-visit these learning objectives near the end of the lesson to see how far they have been achieved. A feature of nearly all lessons is a "quick-fire" question and answer session to assess what pupils have learned. Targets are set for each pupil in English, mathematics and science and are regularly reviewed. By assessing their pupils regularly, teachers know what level (for example level 3c) they are working at. The targets show the level that the individual pupil should be working at by the end of the year. Teachers are therefore fully aware of what is required to be done to maximise each pupil's attainment. They do it most enthusiastically.

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good; relationships and personal development are very good throughout the school.

14. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is very good. They are very interested in school and involve themselves willingly in lessons and other activities. Relationships throughout the school between adults, whatever their role, and pupils are very good.
15. Pupils are given very good opportunities for their own personal development. Whether it is in operating the CD player in assembly, acting as messengers or organising the "Certificates Board" each Friday, they take their job seriously and want to be helpful. They are given appropriate opportunities to learn independently.
16. It is worthy of note that in every lesson seen, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least good and in nearly 90 per cent of lessons they were very good or excellent.

Provision for pupils under five in the school's Early Years Education Centre is very good.

17. There are two classes for pupils under five consisting of a nursery and a reception class. The school sees the role of this area as being that of a true foundation and not merely an "add on". Its work is a very good preparation for Key Stage 1. The classes are housed together in one area of the school and have a large area for integrated activities between them. The learning areas are appropriately organised and this key stage is well managed.
18. In numeracy, the children are given appropriate opportunities to use mathematical language, for example, in number games. Children are able to practise their number work when running the "shop" or acting as a customer in it. Reception children build appropriately on their work in the nursery in, for example, design and technology. They use appropriate language and understand their objectives. Children attain the early learning goals appropriately in all areas.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs, both in the resourced speech and language base and elsewhere in the school is very good.

19. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs nationally are graded from stage 1 to stage 5. At Kings Meadow, there are 11 pupils on stage 1, 10 on stage 2, 13 on stage 3, 1 at stage 4 and 13 pupils at stage 5. This is a very significant proportion of the school's population. It is a credit to the school that these pupils are so well integrated and are stretched academically as much as other pupils.
20. The ten pupils in the resourced speech and language base are making very good progress. They are a mixture of ages from Year 1 to Year 5 and are well supported. The deputy headteacher is responsible for this base and is a very good classroom practitioner. She works very well with the classroom support assistants, all of whom are well briefed as to their role. All the pupils have individual education plans with appropriately tightly focused targets. Reviews of pupils' progress take place appropriately. Pupils in this class are taught in mainstream classes wherever possible, with the required degree of support.
21. Pupils with special needs in other classes are very well supported. Teachers have full knowledge and understanding of pupils' very detailed individual needs.

Links with parents are excellent; the "parents as educators" courses run in the school are having a big impact on pupils' learning.

22. The school has its own coordinator to promote effective links with parents. There are no barriers between the school and parents. Parents are always able to approach school with any concerns. The school provides regular and informative newsletters to parents who find them of great value.

23. Each Monday afternoon, a group of parents arrive for another two hour session on their “parents as educators” course. This is taught by the Year 2 teacher. Parents say that they find this most beneficial. The school is currently training its fifth group of ten parents. Parents are then able to help their children more effectively at home and six of these parents now come into school to help as literacy volunteers. As a result, pupils are able to read more frequently to adults.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Information and communication technology, whilst improving, could improve further.

24. Approximately one month ago, the school opened its new information and communication technology suite. All classes are timetabled appropriately to use this suite on a weekly basis. Additionally there are computers in most classes of the school. The improved facilities for this subject should enable pupils’ skills to be further developed.
25. Currently, pupils’ attainment in using simulations and exploring models in order to answer “What if...?” questions is below national expectations. They are carrying out some appropriate cross curricular work in word processing.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards at the school further, the headteacher and governing body should:

- improve pupils’ attainment in information and communication technology, by ensuring that the areas of using simulations and exploring models are appropriately taught. (Paras 24, 25)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	82	12	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)	28	104
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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
	1999	11	6	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88(59)	88(41)	88(71)
	National	82(80)	83(81)	87(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	10
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82(59)	82(35)	88(47)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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
	1999	4	5	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	7	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78(22)	78(67)	89(78)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	7	7	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78(22)	78(67)	78(78)
	National	68(63)	69(65)	75(72)

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

* Figures omitted where the number of boys or girls is below ten.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	82
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	355780
Total expenditure	399583
Expenditure per pupil	3027
Balance brought forward from previous year	111744
Balance carried forward to next year	67941

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

110

Number of questionnaires returned

44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	75	23	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	66	32	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	25	7	2	11
The teaching is good.	80	18	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	25	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	11	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	18	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	71	27	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	81	14	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	30	0	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	43	5	2	16