



Kings Farm Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118585
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280346
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Joan Greenfield AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cedar Avenue
School category	Community		Gravesend
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Kent DA12 5JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01474 566979
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01474 567767
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Peggy Mersh
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Stella Garner

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

King's Farm Primary is similar in size to most other primary schools. It is situated on the outskirts of Gravesend in an area of considerable social disadvantage. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and nearly two thirds have learning difficulties and disabilities. These proportions are much higher than average. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2001, 2002 and 2003 and has the Healthy Schools Award. It is part of the Gravesham Excellence Cluster.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness and the value for money it provides are satisfactory. The evidence does not support the school's view that its effectiveness is good, mainly because standards and pupils' achievement, although improving, are not yet good enough. However, the school has some strong features, notably the good pastoral care pupils receive and the range of enrichment opportunities that help them engage in learning. Their personal development is good, supported by positive relationships between staff and pupils, and by many worthwhile initiatives to develop their social skills. Although few parents are closely involved with the school, they are strongly encouraged to work with their children at home and to attend school activities. For example, 'Family Music' sessions in the Nursery are popular and developmental for children and their parents. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and has improved over the past three years, although standards remain well below average. Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is satisfactory but few children reach the goals for learning expected of children by the end of Reception. Teaching is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make the progress expected. However, the planning of work in most subjects, and particularly in English, is not matched closely enough to pupils' specific needs to increase their rate of progress. Planning is good in science, with the result that standards are higher than in English and mathematics. Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing pupils' extended writing. Additionally, marking is inconsistent and the targets set for pupils to help them make progress are often unclear. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, who is highly respected in the community, has done much to ensure a calm and supportive climate in the school and is determined to raise standards further. Several initiatives, some with external support, are beginning to improve pupils' learning but have not been in place long enough to raise standards sufficiently. Generally, the school's initiatives require more robust management. Governors are supportive but do not check closely enough the progress that the school is making. Progress since the last inspection shows that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Tighten curricular planning to focus work more carefully on meeting pupils' individual needs, and increase their opportunities for extended, independent writing.
- Ensure greater consistency in marking pupils' work and refine the process of setting them clear targets.
- Provide more robust management to the range of initiatives for raising standards and systematically monitor their impact.
- Extend the role of governors in checking the school's progress, especially in raising standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards remain well below average. Children enter the Nursery with limited skills and experiences, particularly in language and communication, and social and emotional development. From this low baseline, they make good progress in the Foundation Stage, although few reach the goals for learning expected by the end of the Reception Year. Elsewhere, their progress is satisfactory. Weak literacy skills affect learning throughout the school. By Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are better than standards in English, but the unvalidated test results for 2006 show some improvement in English. The results were close to meeting the school's reasonably challenging targets. Several initiatives to raise standards in the school are beginning to have an effect but have yet to produce substantial improvement. The national test results in Year 2 were exceptionally low between 2001 and 2005 but improved slightly this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, but those with the most complex needs, who receive high-quality targeted support, make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. From a very low starting point, their social skills develop well from year to year and they have a good understanding of other cultures. Pupils really enjoy their work and their attitudes are positive. When fully engaged, they often concentrate for extended periods. Behaviour is generally good in classrooms, and frequently very good around the school. Pupils are polite and helpful, and most maintain positive relationships with each other and with adults. Occasionally, a few are unpredictably difficult, but staff deal effectively with all incidents. Most pupils attend regularly, although attendance overall is slightly below the national figure as a small number of families fail to ensure their children attend regularly and on time. The school council helps to promote pupils' views and is involved in occasional projects to improve the school environment, but its role is underdeveloped. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of keeping safe. They know the value of a good diet and many participate enthusiastically in physical activities and team games. They support a variety of local and national charities, and engage in several recycling projects. Their charity work and visits to workplaces, such as a local supermarket, help to prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a variety of interesting activities to motivate the children and broaden their experiences.

Daily planning is adequate, but is not detailed enough to meet children's individual needs. This picture is reflected elsewhere in the school, with some planning taking too little account of children's starting points or their specific needs. For example, higher-attaining pupils sometimes make too little progress because the work does not provide enough challenge. Most teachers manage their classes well. In stimulating lessons, pupils work diligently. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 5, pupils performed a fast-moving playlet in French. The teacher deftly guided the action, without interrupting the flow of the language. Occasionally, pupils are not wholly engaged because teachers' expectations of their responses, and management of their behaviour, are unclear. In all year groups, teachers do not give enough priority to the development of pupils' extended writing skills. Pupils with learning difficulties often benefit from the skilled interventions of teaching assistants. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. The best marking accurately assesses pupils' attainment and clarifies next steps for improvement. However, a substantial amount of marking is irregular and does not always tell pupils how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Pupils are set targets, but their number is often too great or the language too difficult for pupils to understand.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils experience a broad, satisfactory curriculum, enriched by a good variety of additional activities. Older pupils enjoy learning French and Spanish. Emphasis has rightly been placed on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics, although the time allocated to these subjects is not always used effectively. Planning does not always ensure continuity in pupils' learning across the Foundation Stage curriculum, or for developing the cross-curricular skills of literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 6. Pupils make slower progress in these two areas than in science, where the planning is more systematic and better informed by assessment information. Some effective grouping arrangements in mathematics cater for the range of abilities in Years 3 to 6. The provision for and use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning have improved considerably and are good. Pupils follow a programme of personal, social and health education which contributes to their personal development. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of opportunities, which includes visits, visitors, special events, days focused on particular subjects and 'themed' weeks, as well as many after-school activities. These events increase pupils' confidence and experience and make a good contribution to their personal development, particularly their social and cultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory, with particular strengths in pastoral support. Staff have good knowledge of pupils' personal development and are sensitive to their needs. The learning mentor offers valued additional support to individuals and to families. At the school's breakfast and

after-school clubs, many pupils enjoy a variety of food and activities. Good induction quickly settles children into the Nursery and enables pupils joining other year groups to adapt quickly and happily to the school's routines. Pupils in Year 6 confidently anticipate their transfer to secondary education. Child protection procedures and health and safety routines are clear, and are fully understood by all adults. Parents tend to respond passively to school initiatives, but they are pleased with the school's work and are confident that their views are valued. The school systematically monitors and assesses pupils' academic progress throughout the year. Not all teachers use this information systematically in their planning or set challenging enough targets for pupils. Some pupils do not have a clear understanding of their targets and what they are expected to achieve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and her deputy have successfully established a calm and supportive climate in the school. They and the staff have a shared understanding of the wide-ranging needs of pupils and have secure strategies for their personal and academic development. Staff recognise the need to raise standards. They have implemented many initiatives, supported by the local authority or through membership of the Excellence Cluster. These initiatives have not been in place long enough to result in significant improvements and they require sharper management to ensure a coherent whole. The school improvement plan, which includes the raising attainment plan, is satisfactory but rather unwieldy as it contains too many priorities. It lacks precise timescales and measurable targets against which progress can be checked. Systems for checking the quality of the school's work are satisfactory although not always rigorous enough. The need for greater rigour is demonstrated in the school's own evaluation, which judges several aspects of its work to be better than the evidence supports. Key staff contribute satisfactorily to checking the effectiveness of provision and are developing a wider whole-school view as members of the primary strategy group. Parents and carers have limited involvement in supporting their children's education and the school is working hard to increase their levels of support. Governors are supportive but have insufficient influence on the school's longerterm development. Their lack of involvement in closely checking the school's work was an issue in the last inspection and has not improved. The school has made satisfactory progress since that time and has the capacity to improve further but the pace of change must increase if standards are to rise significantly.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children Thank you for telling us about the work that you do and what you like about the school. We enjoyed seeing you at work and play and meeting your teachers. We particularly liked the French play that children in Year 5 performed in assembly and we know that you did as well. These are the good things we found in your school

You are friendly and polite to each other and to visitors, and most of you behave well in lessons and around the school.

Most of you are trying your best and teachers are giving you the right sort of help.

You like being in school and are happy there.

You enjoy your lessons and like to take part in the clubs and other activities the school arranges for you.

Adults in the school look after you well and make sure that you are safe.

The teachers know how well you are doing and how to help you do even better. These are the things we have asked the school to do now

Check that you all have the right sort of work to help you make faster progress and give you more chances to write longer pieces of work.

Make sure that the marking of your work helps you to know what you need to do to improve it and set you clearer targets that you all understand.

Make sure that the teachers check more often that the things they are doing to help you make faster progress are really working.

Make sure that the governors check the work of the school more often to see how well it is doing. You can help in this by always working hard and doing your very best. With best wishes Mrs Joan Greenfield Lead inspector