



Kymbrook Lower School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109590
Local Authority BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 288440
Inspection dates 27–28 September 2006
Reporting inspector Sheelagh Barnes

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

Type of school	First	School address	Kimbolton Road
School category	Community		Keysoe, Keysoe
Age range of pupils	4–9		Bedford, Bedfordshire
			MK44 2HH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01234 376266
Number on roll (school)	60	Fax number	01234 376266
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Alyson Greenstone
		Headteacher	Mrs Ingrid Bell
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–9	27–28 September 2006	288440

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Kymbrook Lower School is a small First School for pupils aged from four to nine, situated in the village of Keysoe, near Bedford. The boys and girls who attend come from homes near the school and the surrounding villages. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is greater than at the time of the previous inspection and is broadly average. Since the previous inspection, the school has been through many changes. There have been four headteachers and the current head was acting on a temporary basis until her permanent appointment in September of this year. She is also the headteacher of another local school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kymbrook Lower School provides a good standard of education. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to come. Attendance is very good. The vast majority of pupils say that they enjoy school and, in questionnaires, nearly all their parents confirm this view. Children in the Reception class settle quickly and easily into school. They make good progress in personal and social development and steady progress in other areas of learning for young children. Across the school provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Good provision then helps them to progress well towards their targets. In English and mathematics, standards are above average and boys and girls achieve equally well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils do particularly well in literacy. In mathematics, while standards in 2005 and 2006 were good, fewer pupils than in previous years attained the higher levels. This was due in part to a larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Currently these year groups are making good progress and achieve well. Progress from Year 2 to Year 4 is good overall. It is particularly good in reading. Pupils have not done as well in mathematics in the recent past. In 2004 they made less than the expected progress between Year 2 and Year 4. Progress in writing was also lower than in previous years. However, standards are already improving and are currently good. The main reason for such improvement is that the headteacher and governors have worked together swiftly and with a common sense of purpose to review the curriculum and to put new effective teaching strategies in place. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan each lesson well to build steadily on previous lessons. However, the quality of longer term planning is variable. While some is detailed and thorough, some is less so. Marking is good and helps pupils to correct their mistakes. Targets are explained to pupils, but the extent to which they know these targets and use them on a daily basis is not yet sufficiently embedded in daily practice. As a result, pupils, particularly the oldest, do not take as much responsibility for their learning as they could. Information to parents is generally good and school takes regard of parents' opinions. However, they are not all regularly informed of their children's current targets in as much detail as possible. Targets are shared with parents at open evenings, but this is not an on-going occurrence during the year. Personal development is excellent, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop high levels of self assurance and communicate with other children and with adults with confidence and sensitivity. Their all round development is a testament to the opportunities that are provided for them. They have a good knowledge of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Their contribution to the community is excellent. Parents say 'School is a central link in our small local community.' The curriculum is good and there is a good range of extra curricular activities for pupils to choose. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn French and this helps to maintain the link with the local middle school. Partnerships the school has developed are excellent. The care, guidance and support that the school provides for its pupils are good. Parents say that 'Kymbrook is a school that cares' and that their children feel 'comfortable and nurtured throughout as a result'. Resources are used well and finances managed efficiently to provide good value for money. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve further, due

to the accurate evaluation of its performance and the determination of all involved to aim for high standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share targets with older pupils and their parents, and explain what they need to do next to improve still further. - Ensure that teachers' planning for pupils of all abilities is more consistent across the school and contains sufficient detail.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry varies year-on-year due to the small size of some year groups, but it is broadly average. Children settle well into the Reception class and make steady gains in their learning overall and good progress in personal and social development. They make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of their time in Key Stage 1, standards are above average. They are particularly good in reading where more than the average proportion of pupils attains at a high level. Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is good as pupils make good gains in their learning. Standards are generally higher than expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 4. This is an improvement as in the recent past pupils were making insufficient progress in mathematics, which is now good. Pupils from all groups, including those with special educational needs are achieving well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils settle into school quickly and easily. Most pupils enjoy school hugely and their attendance is excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From the youngest, pupils show good consideration for others, taking turns, sharing and looking after each other well. Behaviour is excellent and boys and girls of all ages play and work together exceptionally well. Pupils develop a good level of awareness of how to have a healthy life-style and take care of their body. They know what foods to eat and take part in a wide range of sporting and other activities. The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community is excellent. They take part in a wide range of local events such as shows and concerts. For example, they recently held a party for the Pathfinders who flew from the local airfield in the Second World war. They also raise significant funds for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Boys and girls of all abilities and those with special educational needs achieve well due to the good teaching they receive. Teachers plan lessons well, taking good account of what pupils already know and can do. Pupils find lessons enjoyable because teachers make good use of interesting resources, such as when one teacher brought in her wedding photograph album. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about lessons, for example, in mathematics because there was a challenge to find out if there is any link between the length of a persons' fingers and their arm. Assessment is good and the school has effective systems to monitor pupils' progress. Marking is regular and accurate. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to explain to pupils the targets they need to concentrate on next to improve still further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is planned effectively to have a positive impact on pupils' progress and their personal development. The curriculum for mathematics has been reviewed and a programme has been put in place to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. This is already improving provision effectively and preparing pupils well for later life. Planning of individual lessons ensures that pupils of all abilities do work that is at the right level for them. However, there is inconsistency in the longer term planning of what is taught across the school. Some planning for the forthcoming term is good and very detailed but this is not always the case and some is so brief as to be little use to others or in monitoring coverage. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in relation to its size. Pupils benefit from sporting and other activities. This includes the opportunity to learn French, due to effective links with the local middle school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' happiness and safety are promoted effectively. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The new system to monitor pupils' academic progress is rigorous. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils to improve their work and share the information with them regularly. However, many pupils still have a limited overview of the steps they need to take next. Health and welfare is promoted well and as a result pupils learn to make good choices such as in their diet. Good care is also taken to ensure that pupils know who to turn to if they need help with a problem and this makes them confident and happy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are strongly focussed on raising standards. The leadership of the headteacher is clear sighted and she has a good understanding of what needs to be improved. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. Monitoring is rigorous and takes suitable account of the views of pupils and parents. The headteacher and governors have worked successfully to improve the building and grounds and to raise standards, particularly in mathematics. Who takes charge of coordinating subjects is in some cases still in being reviewed due to the newness of many of the staff, but subject leadership is developing well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 September 2006 Dear Children Kymbrook Lower School, Kimbolton Road, Keysoe, Bedfordshire. MK44 2HH Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently and for being so polite and friendly. I really enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. What I liked most about your school. - You enjoy lessons, because school is a happy place and you come to school very regularly unless you are really ill. - The teaching you receive is helping you to make good progress. - Teachers set clear rules for you and your behaviour and personal development is excellent. You play and work together very well. - You do a lot of exceptionally interesting and exciting things in the community and learn to think of others. - There is a good range of sporting activities and other interesting lessons such as French which I know that you really enjoy, and there are very good links with other schools, such as your local middle school. - Your headteacher and governors are working hard with all the teachers and helpers, to make school a safe and comfortable place for you to learn in. - Your headteacher knows what to do to make your school even better. What we have asked your school to do now. - We are asking teachers to take even more care in planning lessons at the right level for each one of you for each term. - Your teachers need to make more clear to the older pupils and their parents the targets needed to tackle to improve still further. I really enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and wish you all well for the future. Yours sincerely Mrs Barnes