



Kingsclere Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116295
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290488
Inspection dates 7–8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ash Grove
School category	Foundation		Kingsclere
Age range of pupils	4–11		Newbury RG20 5RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01635298583
Number on roll (school)	260	Fax number	01635298983
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Rodway
		Headteacher	Mr Duncan Wood (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kingsclere Church of England Primary School is larger than average. Most of its pupils are White British. A few pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups and a small proportion is learning English as an additional language. The pupils come from a mix of social backgrounds. Fewer pupils than is usually found are entitled to free school meals. The school is currently going through a period of change as the deputy headteacher takes the role of acting headteacher. This is to cover the time between the retirement of the last headteacher and the appointment of a successor. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for two months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides a good quality of education and enables its pupils to achieve well. In the few weeks since he was appointed, the acting headteacher has established a strong sense of teamwork among the staff. They, and the governors, show good commitment to maintaining the school's strengths and are working hard to improve the quality of education for its pupils.

Parents greatly appreciate all that the school does, saying that 'the needs of the children are always taken into account'. The effective provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start to their learning.

Effective leadership at all levels, good teaching and a stimulating curriculum promote good achievement, so that by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. However, despite this, standards in writing are significantly lower than those for reading, often because the challenge provided for pupils is not consistently as good as it could be. This has been recognised by the school and initiatives, such as improving the way that pupils plan story writing, are beginning to have a positive impact. There is more to do though, particularly to raise the attainment of pupils who are capable of achieving the higher levels in writing.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the school's strong focus on the individual pupil. It is enhanced by the good care, guidance and support provided for pupils, as well as good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. They readily accept the many responsibilities they are given around the school. Through participation in the wide range of sporting activities provided, and daily opportunities to eat healthily, the pupils gain good knowledge about healthy lifestyles. Their understanding of how to keep safe is constantly increasing through the school's curriculum and by means of effective procedures for managing behaviour. The school's intensive focus on teaching basic skills, and giving pupils meaningful opportunities to be involved in fund raising, helps prepare them very effectively for life beyond school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, ensuring that teachers challenge all pupils to do as well as they can, and paying particular attention to the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils' achievement is good and, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are typical of or below those usually found in four-year-olds. The good provision in the Foundation Stage enables them to make good progress from their starting points. By the end of the Reception year, a majority of children reach the expected goals in several areas of learning and about a third exceeds them. The good

teaching from Years 1 to 6 builds on this good start and all groups of pupils continue to make good progress. Since the previous inspection, much effort has been put into raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and, as a result, standards are now at least average.

The school's recent focus on improving pupils' writing by increasing their vocabulary is beginning to have a positive impact, but this is not yet sufficient to raise standards. The school is revising and improving its procedures for tracking pupils' progress and providing additional support for pupils who are making less progress than they should. This, too, is helping to accelerate their progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils relate well to each other and to staff. They feel valued and enjoy school. This is reflected in above average attendance rates. They gain a good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Pupils respond well to the school's active promotion of mutual respect, tolerance and understanding. They feel safe and free from harassment and this enables them to express their concerns and feelings, confident that they will be listened to. Pupils respond positively to the opportunities provided for them to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to develop their self-awareness. They increase their knowledge of cultures and traditions satisfactorily through the curriculum, as well as special events and visits.

Pupils understand the need to eat healthily. One pupil commented, 'Every day I eat a healthy pudding to make me big and strong'. Many pupils participate in sports clubs, and speak enthusiastically about swimming and cross-country running. They willingly assist in the smooth running of the school and contribute well to events in the community. Although the school council provides a forum for pupils to contribute ideas to enhance school life, there are too few opportunities for pupils to initiate, direct and complete their own projects through the council. Opportunities to work collaboratively help to prepare pupils well for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and contribute to the pupils' good achievement. The good relationships between the staff and pupils help the pupils to feel secure. They appreciate the way the teachers help them. As one pupil commented, 'If we get stuck with our work, the teachers always help us'. This encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and to ask questions in the knowledge that they will be listened to. Where teachers provide different writing tasks that both meet the needs of the various groups within their classes and build on their previous learning, pupils make better progress. A good example was observed where pupils in Year 2 were given

different tasks to help them learn how to write instructions. However, this is not consistent practice. Learning support assistants work well with teachers to provide additional support and contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

Assessment is being used with increasing effectiveness to identify those areas where pupils need extra help. It is used particularly well in the Foundation Stage to monitor progress, and to plan subsequent work that builds on what the children already know and can do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well balanced and enhanced effectively by a good range of educational visits and by visitors to the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about residential visits. Special topic weeks, such as an arts week, enrich the curriculum as well as supporting multicultural awareness. A wide range of clubs are provided and these do much to encourage pupils to take exercise and enjoy learning. The curriculum to support personal development is currently being reviewed so as to give even greater focus to promoting pupils' self-esteem.

Pupils of all abilities enjoy a full curriculum. It is adjusted well to support the learning of higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties. The stimulating curriculum in the Foundation Stage encourages children to enjoy learning. The school recognises that it could increase the learning that takes place outdoors in the Foundation Stage. The use of ICT, mathematics and reading is promoted well in other subjects. The school is increasing its focus on using writing effectively across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good, and this establishes an environment in which pupils feel valued and ready to learn. Parents affirm this overwhelmingly, saying that 'the teachers display a caring and thoughtful approach, and accommodate individual needs'. Systems for behaviour management are successful. Liaison with outside agencies and local schools is used effectively to support the well being and academic development of all of the pupils. Academic guidance is satisfactory and is being improved by the introduction of a new system to increase pupils' involvement in evaluating their academic progress. Support for pupils when they join the school, and when they prepare to move on to secondary school, is comprehensive and well considered.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and contribute to the good progress made by the pupils. Staff and governors are successfully involved in school self-evaluation and this produces an accurate view of how well the school is doing and what needs to

happen next. This, combined with its track record of successful initiatives, such as the promotion of healthy eating and the raising of standards in ICT, indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve. The leadership structure ensures good communication among all staff and this contributes to the effective teamwork within the school. The views of parents and pupils are valued, considered and acted upon.

The roles of subject leaders are developing well and they are suitably involved in some monitoring of standards and in promoting good practice. They are currently increasing their influence over teaching and learning in their subjects across the whole school.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are currently increasing their monitoring roles. They provide the acting headteacher with a good balance of support and challenge.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2
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

Kingsclere CE Primary School, Ash Grove, Kingsclere, Newbury RG20 5RE

On behalf of the inspectors, I should like to thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school. We all enjoyed talking to you during our visit and your views and opinions were very helpful. You were polite, well behaved and worked and played well together.

It is clear that you enjoy coming to school and that you and your parents and carers are proud of it. The inspectors agree with you that you go to a good school that helps you to learn well. Your teachers work very hard to help you succeed. As a result, you do well in the tests in Year 6. However, your test results show that your reading is much better than your writing. Your headteacher and teachers are already trying to help all of you to improve your writing, and we have asked them to do more of this.

You told us how much you enjoy attending clubs and having special events like Arts Week. Your teachers, and visitors to your school, teach you about keeping healthy and the importance of taking regular exercise. It is good that you eat healthily in school and enjoy sports and physical education. You know how to keep safe and you told us that there is always someone to help you if you have a problem.

Your headteacher and all the staff care very much about you and want you to do well. They are good at finding ways to make your school even better, and we hope that you will do your best to help them.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Ward

Lead inspector