



King's Somborne Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116296
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290489
Inspection dates 6–7 November 2006
Reporting inspector Anthony Green

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	King's Somborne
School category	Voluntary controlled		Stockbridge
Age range of pupils	4–11		SO20 6PN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01794388381
Number on roll (school)	119	Fax number	01794388381
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Brian Gravenor
		Headteacher	Mr Nick Winning
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 November 2006	290489

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving the village of King's Somborne and its neighbouring villages. Most pupils are of white ethnic background and none speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average. Most pupils are grouped in mixed aged classes. Pupil mobility is higher than average and the number of pupils in each year group can vary significantly from year to year. The majority of pupils come from socially advantaged backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

and;quot;Although we live over 7 miles from the school it is worth the journey because I know that my youngest son will be happy, safe and given every opportunity available.and;quot; This is how one parent summed up her child's education, and it is a view that is echoed overwhelmingly by the vast majority of parents and carers.

King's Somborne views itself as a good and effective school and the inspector agrees. Pupils make good progress and develop into very confident, responsible and mature young people. The school is justifiably held in high regard by parents, carers, pupils and the community. The very good relationships amongst all in the school are a strong feature.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. They arrive promptly and are eager to start lessons. They feel very safe and secure and take pride in everything they do. Their personal, social and moral development is outstanding. They care for one another. One pupil said and;quot;I like coming to school. Everyone is friendly. It is fun.and;quot; Pupils also care for the environment, not only within the school boundaries but in the local community.

The good quality of the curriculum and the outstanding range of enrichment activities support pupils' personal development very well. However, opportunities for developing their writing across different subjects, especially for more able pupils, are not always given. There is a very high take-up of extra-curricular music, arts and sports activities, which are open to all pupils and develop their well-being. A number of these activities, such as maypole dancing and the school's band, also enhance links within the community. Pupils know about the need to lead a healthy life-style and many proudly comment that they attend a and;quot;healthy school.and;quot;

Teaching is good overall. The good teaching results in good progress by pupils. Teachers plan interesting lessons and use resources effectively, especially information and communication technology (ICT). Children in the Reception/Year 1 class are taught through a good range of approaches that develop their learning well. Elsewhere, teachers have high expectations but do not always tell pupils the objectives of the lesson so they know what is to be learnt and why. The marking of pupils' work lacks consistency and does not always tell them how to improve.

Standards vary from year to year because of the small number of pupils taking national tests. However, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and vulnerable pupils, make good progress and achieve well.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. He is well supported by all staff and the governing body. There is a shared desire to move the school forward, which has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection and a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the opportunities for developing writing across the curriculum.

- Raise further the quality of teaching by ensuring pupils always know the purpose of their learning and receive good quality feedback about the progress they are making.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The small number of pupils in each year group and the high mobility of pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, mean that standards vary from year to year. Children enter reception with skills that are generally average though above average in their personal, social and physical development. They make good progress in the six areas of learning and are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Most achieve the early learning goals expected of five-year-olds. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

In Years 3–6 the small number of pupils in each year group and the high mobility of pupils mean that standards often fluctuate year to year. For instance, in 2005 a significant proportion of Year 6 pupils had learning difficulties and standards fell to levels that were in line with the national average. Results in 2006 show improvement, but the small number of higher attaining pupils who took the tests resulted in lower than average numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels. However, the school's comprehensive assessment of each pupil shows that the present Years 4, 5 and 6 are achieving well and make good progress. Standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, vulnerable and looked after pupils are well supported and make equally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Reception children settle happily, which supports their good progress. Pupils are considerate to one another and behave very well. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and are eager to talk about their work. They develop a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that will equip them well for later life and learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. In the playground and around the school the older pupils naturally support younger ones. Pupils are learning about decision making through fund raising activities and the school council. Not only has the council improved playground resources but they have given a successful presentation to the parish council, which resulted in improvements to the village playground. Pupils' cultural experiences are enhanced by visits by African and Indian dancers. Enough money was raised by the pupils to build a school in Ghana.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Taken overall teaching and learning are good. Lively, well organised teaching in the Foundation Stage successfully prepares pupils for work in Year 1. Although not spacious, the outdoor play area is used well to enhance children's personal and creative development. Throughout the school relationships between adults and pupils are very good and this sets a positive tone for learning. In an outstanding French lesson one pupil said and;quot;It's really fun. We get to know another language and how the words are different. I want to go to France and use it.and;quot; In many classes teachers were observed making effective use of questioning to assess, consolidate and deepen pupils' understanding of their work. However, in the occasional satisfactory lesson the pace of learning slows because teachers do not always tell the pupils what it is they are expected to learn. Teachers mark work regularly, but their comments are not yet consistent in telling the pupils how to improve their work. As a result pupils are not always sure of their personal targets and the progress they are making towards them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and relevant to all pupils. Good links are made between subjects and planning ensures that pupils in mixed aged classes do not repeat the same work over two years. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their writing across all areas of the curriculum. Themed days and themed weeks are used well to enrich learning opportunities. Good links with local primary and secondary schools enhance the teaching of mathematics, sports and French. Since the previous inspection, experiences provided for children in the reception class have improved and the Foundation Stage curriculum is suitably balanced and enriched.

Extra-curricular activities are outstanding and support pupils' personal development very well. Arts, music and sports activities are exciting elements. Participation rates in the wide ranging activities are very good. Older pupils also have the opportunity to take part in two residential visits. Education for safe and healthy lifestyles is prominent and the school is working towards and;quot;Healthy Schoolsand;quot; status.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. This view is overwhelmingly endorsed by parents and carers. One parent wrote and;quot;Staff have been absolutely wonderful and extremely supportive in helping my son. They have really helped and worked with us to help him.and;quot; Pupils are valued and cared for. They speak highly of all staff. There are good procedures in place for ensuring the protection, safety and well-being of pupils. The school has developed good systems for checking pupils' progress.

Teachers make good use of this information to set targets to help children improve, though pupils are not always sufficiently clear about their personal day-to-day targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. and;quot;We are particularly impressed with the excellent leadership (of the headteacher). He has a brilliant relationship with the children and is respected by the pupils and parentsand;quot; is how one parent described the strong leadership of the headteacher. He is held in high regard by staff, parents and pupils. The headteacher and all staff work well together as a team. Weaknesses from the previous inspection have been addressed. Co-ordinators manage their subjects well. Many have more than one subject to develop and so prioritise on a three year cycle. The quality of leadership and management in the Reception year is good.

Governors give the headteacher their full support and take a very active interest in the school. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development and hold the school to account through well focused debates.

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

Thank you for your very friendly welcome when I visited your school on the 6th and 7th of November. I really enjoyed talking to so many of you and hearing about your work. You and your parents told me that you go to a good school and I agree. The staff are giving you a good standard of education. They are helping you to become polite, kind and considerate young people.

I was especially impressed by how well you all get on together and how much you enjoy school. I like the way you take the opportunities to attend so many clubs and activities provided by your teachers. I thought the band played wonderfully. When I sat with you at lunchtime, you were rightly pleased when you told me you attend a healthy school. I think the teaching in the school is good and is preparing you well for your future life. Your headteacher and the school governors work hard together to make sure you get a good education.

I do think that there are some things that could be even better. Although you told me that you have targets to help improve your work, not everyone could remember those targets. I have asked your teachers to help you be clearer about how you can improve your work. I have also asked that they give you more opportunities to write in all subjects.

I wish you well in all that you do in school this year and thank you again for making me feel so welcome.

Anthony Green

Lead inspector