

Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116700
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	290600
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Pilot
Headteacher	Colin Mutton
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Kingstone Hereford HR2 9HJ
Telephone number	01981 250338
Fax number	01981 250338

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a rural area in the Golden Valley near Hereford and draws children from the surrounding villages. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The school suffered a major fire in 2004 and the re-building work has only recently been completed. There has been considerable instability in staffing in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kingstone and Thruxton Primary provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education for its pupils. After a period of some considerable instability in staffing and the disruption of building work, the school's leadership is driving forward positive change. This is showing in steadily rising standards, though more remains to be done to further raise achievement. The majority of parents have positive views of the school. As one parent said, 'Our school has a warm and happy environment and all the staff have gone beyond the call of duty to ensure my children are happy here'.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily over their time in school. Children enter the Reception with below-expected skill levels. They make satisfactory progress, although standards remain below average by the time they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, although standards are below average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 picks up slightly and pupils reach broadly average standards in English and science at the end of Year 6. However, standards in mathematics remain below average because not enough is expected of pupils; the tasks they are set are not matched well enough to their different learning needs and this slows their progress.

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well cared for and make good progress. Teaching assistants make a consistently positive contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. One parent commented, 'I know my son will reach his potential because he is well supported in his learning.' The quality of teaching is satisfactory and this enables sound learning. The use of assessment to inform teachers' planning is, however, inconsistent.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils speak confidently about their achievements and are proud of their school. They are caring and attentive towards each other and respect the adults they work with. Attendance is good. Pupils are successfully taught how to stay healthy and safe. They collect money for charities and take part in a wide range of activities in the community. The pupils enjoy coming to school, behave very well and make an impressive contribution to the school community.

The school works well with outside agencies and parents are largely positive and supportive. However, some parents would appreciate more regular opportunities to express their views about the work of the school. The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Individual targets for pupils' academic progress are at the early stages of implementation and are not yet consistently used by all teachers. As a result, many pupils are unsure of what they need to do in order to improve their work.

The school's leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has formulated a clear direction for the school which is shared by the senior leadership team. The school has a secure understanding of the main areas for development and its self-evaluation is accurate. However, in otherwise satisfactory monitoring, lesson observations do not always identify clear targets for teachers to improve or pay enough attention to evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement across the school, especially in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Establish a more rigorous approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.
- Ensure that assessment information is used more effectively to plan for future learning and involves pupils in reviewing their progress. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's strategies are having a positive impact, as shown in the steadily rising standards by the end of Year 6, though more work remains to be done to raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2 to ensure all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.

When children enter the school their attainment is below the expected levels, most noticeably in calculation, reading and writing. The children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, although standards remain below average when they enter Year 1. In Key Stage 1, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in reading, writing and mathematics, with standards closer to national expectations than at the start of Year 1, but remaining below average. In Key Stage 2, achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress made by pupils varies. It is good in Years 3 and 5, particularly in reading and writing, where assessment information is used effectively by teachers to support pupils' learning. In Years 4 and 6, progress is sound. By the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are broadly in line with the national average but are better in reading and writing than in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in relation to targets in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is a significant strength of the school. Pupils get along together very well and their behaviour is often exemplary. They are mature, sensible young people who take on responsibility willingly and competently. The school council and eco committee are proud of their school and ensure the pupils' views are heard and action is taken to improve their school. The pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles and understand the need to take regular exercise and eat healthily. They are passionate about improving the environment, recycling and reducing pollution. In all, these qualities translate into an outstanding contribution to this orderly school community where pupils feel happy and safe. Spiritual, moral and social development is good but pupils' understanding of cultures and religions outside Christianity is limited. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and follow instructions promptly and mostly they take pride in their work. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. A small number of pupils said that they found the work easy at times and would appreciate the opportunity to express their views on a more regular basis. Workplace skills are developed satisfactorily, reflecting the broadly average literacy and numeracy skills which pupils attain.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

One parent said, 'Staff members should be commended for their commitment and enthusiasm towards the pupils'. The inspection team agree. Teachers are good humoured and readily engage in conversations about improving their work. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good. In many lessons pupils have good opportunities to work in pairs, assess their own work and take part in interesting and enjoyable tasks. In a minority of lessons pupils' progress slows because their work is not matched well enough to their different learning needs. This is because not all teachers are using assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Marking is sound. It is often helpful and informative, particularly when responding to written work. In mathematics, marking is not as helpful as it could be. It does not inform pupils regularly about what they have to do to improve their work. This is one reason why progress in mathematics is weaker than in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides good opportunities for learning and helps pupils to become confident, caring and respectful individuals. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, who are fully included and able to achieve well. Pupils' academic needs are met, although there are too few opportunities to enhance understanding of world faiths.

The introduction of a high quality creative experience in Year 4, known as 'Wellie Wednesday', adds significantly to many aspects of pupils' personal development and learning. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities, which are well attended. This good provision encourages pupils to lead healthy and happy lives and achieve high standards in music and sport. Residential visits are offered to pupils from Year 3 upwards and this is another strong feature of the school's curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are looked after well and receive a good level of pastoral care and support. Well-established daily routines, high expectations of behaviour and a safe, high quality environment all help pupils to feel happy and comfortable. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory and arrangements for safeguarding all pupils are secure. Inspections of the school site are regular and staff are vigilant in recognising and reducing potential hazards, for example, the canes supporting garden plants have been 'capped' to protect pupils.

Relationships amongst pupils and staff are good and pupils feel confident to ask for help when they need it. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and support pupils well, especially lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties. Consequently, these pupils often make good progress. The academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Teachers' marking of pupils' work, particularly in mathematics, is variable and, as a result, not all pupils know what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's collective leadership and management are satisfactory and have had a positive influence in moving the school forward. The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school and is developing a committed team of senior leaders. The school improvement plan, self-evaluation and arrangements for teachers' performance management are satisfactory. However, there is not a sufficiently rigorous check on the quality of teaching and the effect this has on pupil achievement. Feedback to teachers is not sharp enough and, as a result, teachers do not always know what to do to improve.

The governing body have sustained a number of changes in key personnel in recent months and have worked effectively to fulfil their statutory duties despite the changes. Governors are supportive of the school but recognise that they need to be a more challenging 'critical friend'.

Annex A

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 May 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School, Hereford, HR2 9HJ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We learned a lot about it through talking to you, seeing how you were getting on in your lessons and sharing your assemblies. We could see that you enjoy coming to school and try hard to do your best and help each other. We think your school council and eco committee do a good job and work hard to improve things for you. At the moment the school is providing a satisfactory education.

You told us how much you appreciate your school, particularly the opportunities to join after-school clubs and take part in other interesting activities, particularly learning French, music, sports and going on residential trips.

We have asked the school to improve even further by;

- making sure you achieve higher standards, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- ensuring that your lessons are interesting, help you do well and build in opportunities for you to check your progress and identify what you need to do to improve your work
- making sure that when senior leaders visit lessons to see how well you are doing they keep an accurate record of your progress.

We shall take away lots of good memories about your school. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely,

Marian Harker Lead Inspector