



Kemsing Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118277
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 291070
Inspection dates 28–29 November 2006
Reporting inspector Liz Kounnou

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	West End
School category	Community		Kemsing
Age range of pupils	4–11		Sevenoaks TN15 6PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01732 761236
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	01732 763237
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Chris Arnold
		Headteacher	Eileen Mumford
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kemsing is a little smaller than the majority of primary schools and serves an area of economic advantage. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with only around 6% from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils joining during the school year is higher than usually found and the school has been growing steadily over recent years. The school identifies that 22% of the pupils have learning difficulties, which is a higher percentage than in most schools. However, the proportion with specific learning difficulties is less than 1%.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kemsing Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Since the last inspection, standards have been broadly average although there has been year on year variation. Significant staffing difficulties have slowed progress so that not all pupils have done as well as they should from Year 3 to Year 6. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recently, school leaders successfully resolved the staffing difficulties and a determined new team of senior staff introduced appropriate strategies to tackle the legacy of problems. The school has already brought about some improvement in pupils' achievement and the Year 6 test results in 2006 were higher than those of the previous year. However, not all pupils have fully made up the ground lost and the results still reflect some underachievement. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but need to be even better in writing and science where pupils make particularly slow progress in Key Stage 2. The satisfactory quality of education in the Foundation Stage ensures children reach standards that are similar to those expected for their age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and reach above average standards.

An adequate curriculum is enriched well with interesting things to do in many lessons and this means that pupils really enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to their work. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and feel safe at school. Pupils are confident and often work well together. Their contributions to the school and to the local community are outstanding. They enthusiastically support local causes and the school council even contributes to the school's improvement plan. Although care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall, pastoral care is good. The school is well on the way towards a Healthy Schools award.

The school has clearly resolved many of the previous difficulties but it still has further to go. Although pupils' progress is monitored, this does not always lead to prompt action where there are weaknesses. As a result, underachievement has not always been tackled rigorously. Pupils are beginning to know their new targets but these do not yet provide clear guidance about what to learn next. This is hampering progress, especially in writing and science from Years 3 to 6.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils from Years 3 to 6 reach sufficiently challenging targets in writing and science each year and make the progress they should.
- Ensure that rigorous monitoring of progress leads to prompt and effective action as soon as the school identifies potential underachievement, and that governors are fully informed of pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave school, standards are broadly average, except in writing, where they are lower. In Key Stage 1, standards are above average and pupils achieve well. In Key Stage 2, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could. The progress of these pupils is slower in writing and science, given the standards they reached in Year 2. There is not enough challenge for these pupils, particularly in their investigative work in science. Pupils' progress in all subjects accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Nonetheless, in the 2006 national tests, the school's targets for English and mathematics were not met, although results were close to the national average. Pupils who have specific learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because care is taken to ensure they receive good support and reach suitable targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. The school council is full of confidence and works with other local schools as well as influencing its own school. Pupil 'buddies' proudly take care of younger children. Pupils behave well in lessons and at playtimes, making sure they keep themselves and others safe as they play. They say that bullying or rough play are very rare but, if they do occur, staff take them seriously. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They drink water throughout the day, organising this themselves. Attendance is satisfactory. Almost all parents say their children enjoy school. Pupils are enthusiastic about many lessons, some of which are great fun. Pupils develop satisfactory skills for their future well-being. They are particularly good at working in teams and these skills will stand them in good stead in later life. So too will the information and communication technology (ICT) skills they are acquiring in the new suite. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 are not developing basic skills in literacy as well as they could.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have improved now there is a permanent team of staff. A concerted effort to raise standards, especially in writing, is beginning to take effect. The leadership team provides clear guidance for staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning further, but there are still inconsistencies throughout the school. Marking in Year 6 is particularly diligent and much appreciated by the pupils. One girl said, 'It makes me feel nice because he does it to help us.' The

comments help pupils to see how they could improve their work but this is not typical of marking throughout the school. Assessment information is now gathered regularly but it is not used effectively to ensure that pupils build on their skills in lessons. For example, there is not a clear enough method of monitoring progress in science from year to year, so that some of the work is not challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enlivened particularly well by various visits and visitors, which capture pupils' interest and imagination. Pupils consider that the number of exciting visits is one of the best things about the school. One parent wrote, 'There is a fantastic range of clubs', and others agreed that these activities add significantly to pupils' enjoyment. The curriculum does not consistently ensure that pupils build on their skills from year to year. There is some mismatch between pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2 and the curriculum that is planned for Year 3 pupils, especially in writing and science. As a result, some pupils lose the ground they gained in Years 1 and 2. There are not enough opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to improve their writing skills in lessons across the curriculum. The senior leadership team is fully aware of these issues and is beginning to take action.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. One parent singled out the caring staff as the school's best feature. The good relationships between staff and pupils contribute strongly to pupils' happiness. Pupils know that they can approach staff with confidence if they have any problems. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety meet requirements. The school is working to improve the guidance that pupils receive about how to reach the next steps for learning. A new system of sharing targets with pupils is being tried. However, the advice given on how they can judge their own achievements differs from class to class; this leads to some confusion and limits the effectiveness of the new system.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new senior leadership team is inexperienced but makes up for this with determination. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is satisfactory. School leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and collect a wealth of data about pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, they do not make the best use of all the data to monitor the rate of progress for different groups in English, mathematics and science. This means that action is not taken early enough to help pupils who start to fall behind. Governors are not fully informed about pupils' progress. Nonetheless, they have been

extremely supportive and contributed well towards resolving the recent staffing crisis. The capacity to make improvements is satisfactory and indeed some improvements have been secured. Standards have risen and teaching has improved, but there is still substantial underachievement in specific areas that needs to be tackled more rigorously.

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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?	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	No

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	3

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	3
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?	3
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.

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make good progress in most of their lessons.
- You all behave well and are very polite in lessons and around the school.
- You make an excellent contribution to your community by raising funds for local charities and through the work of the school council.
- There are a lot of extra activities for you to do that you really enjoy.
- All the adults in the school look after you well and you feel safe. These are the things that we think could be better:
- The writing targets that are set for you do not always take account of what you already know.
- In science, the work you are asked to do from Year 3 to Year 6 does not always help you to improve your skills quickly enough.
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all keep up with your work by checking the progress you are making more often.

Your teachers will work to make these improvements as quickly as possible, and we are sure you will work with them to help do this.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.