



Kingswood Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118524
Local Authority Kent
Inspection number 294314
Inspection date 28 November 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Skinner

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cayser Drive
School category	Community		Kingswood
Age range of pupils	3-11		Maidstone ME17 3QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01622 842674
Number on roll (school)	68	Fax number	01622 842674
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Erica Duckworth
		Headteacher	Emma Hicking
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kingswood Primary is a small three-class school in a rural setting not far from Maidstone. Most of its pupils are of White British origin. A very small minority come from traveller backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much higher than usually seen, including pupils with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although this varies from year to year because of the small number of pupils involved. When the school was inspected in November 2005 it was judged to require a Notice to Improve in relation to standards and the quality of teaching in Years 2 and 3. The substantive headteacher has been on extended sick leave for much of 2006, during which time the school's senior teacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has improved significantly since it was inspected in November 2005 and now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Clear-sighted and determined leadership by the acting headteacher has maintained an unswerving focus on raising standards and improving pupils' rate of progress. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Above-average standards have been maintained in Year 6 and standards in Year 2 have risen from the exceptionally low levels achieved in 2005 to meet national averages in 2006. More-able pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but middle-ability pupils could do better in reading and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, more-able pupils do not do as well as they should in science, especially in investigative work. In the Foundation Stage, a well-planned curriculum and good teaching enable children to make good progress. The quality of teaching has improved and is now satisfactory. Recently introduced systems for assessing and tracking the progress of individual pupils now help teachers to set suitably challenging targets for all pupils. As a result, progress is now satisfactory. However, they are not yet being used effectively enough to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress in lessons. The curriculum has been transformed and is now good. It ensures that skills and knowledge are developed progressively as pupils move through the school and provides them with an interesting and exciting range of activities. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and their behaviour is good. Good quality care, support and guidance ensure that pupils feel safe and develop into well-rounded young people. Their personal development is good because the school nurtures them and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils play an important part in the everyday life of the school and show a developing awareness of their rights and responsibilities as young citizens. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has many good leadership qualities and a clear vision for the school's future development. She has led the school well through a difficult year and has achieved much through strong teamwork with staff and governors. However, she has too many curriculum responsibilities, in addition to a regular teaching commitment. Staff changes and uncertainty over the future leadership and management of the school have slowed down the development of the leadership roles of other teachers. Despite this, the school's track record over the past 12 months shows that it has a satisfactory capacity to consolidate its achievements to date and to move on.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Years 1 and 2 in reading and mathematics, especially for middle-ability pupils, and for the more able pupils in science in Years 3 to 6.
- Make more effective use of assessment and tracking information in order to make further improvement in the rate of pupils' progress.
- Distribute management respons

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has successfully tackled the shortcomings identified by the last inspection that led to inadequate achievement in Years 1, 2 and 3. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, including for those with learning difficulties and traveller children. Recent improvements in teaching and the curriculum are having a beneficial impact on the rate of progress currently being made by the pupils. For example, the pupils who underachieved in Year 2 made up significant lost ground in Year 3 and are now achieving the standards expected for their age in Year 4. Standards are above average in Year 6, which represents satisfactory achievement for these pupils, given their above-average attainment in Year 2. More-able pupils do particularly well in English and reasonably well in mathematics, but too few reach the higher levels in science. Further recent improvements in the Foundation Stage provision are helping Reception children to make good progress. The needs of Year 1 pupils, who are taught alongside Reception children, are being met much more effectively and this is helping them to make good progress. Standards in Year 2 returned to average levels in 2006 after the significant dip in 2005. The more able pupils did well, but too few of the middle-ability pupils reached the level expected for their age in reading and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The improvements in pupils' personal development can be attributed to a combination of better teaching and a more inspiring curriculum. Pupils show pride in their school and in their own achievements. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Increased opportunities for pupils to learn about a wide range of cultures have expanded their awareness of the world around them. They behave well and are attentive in lessons, but do not always demonstrate independence and initiative in learning. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the opportunities they have to shoulder responsibilities, such as representing their class on the school council and acting as sports leaders. Older pupils take responsibility for younger children at lunchtime and sometimes support them in their learning. Improvements to the play areas, many of which have been instigated by the pupils, have helped to make playtime a safe and pleasant experience for all pupils. Older pupils learn to work in teams and develop enterprise and financial skills through projects such as planning and costing a disco and purchasing new play equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school has successfully eradicated the inadequate teaching that was identified by the last inspection. The acting headteacher has worked alongside staff to demonstrate good practice and support them in making improvements. Every pupil now has challenging targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Regular assessments enable teachers to check how well pupils are progressing but marking is not yet used consistently to show pupils how to improve their work. Some good teaching has been observed in every class, but it is not yet consistent enough. This is partly because teachers do not always make full use of assessment information to plan work that enables all pupils to make good progress in the lesson. Teachers do not always encourage the independent learning and organisational skills that pupils need to prepare them for later life. Monitoring has shown that teaching in science for older pupils does not develop their investigative skills to sufficiently high levels.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Marked improvements in the curriculum are having a good impact on pupils' progress. The curriculum is designed to develop pupils' skills and knowledge progressively, building upon what they already know and can do. In addition, teachers have selected topics and themes that interest the pupils and capture their imagination. As one pupil put it, 'You all get to do lots of exciting things'. Creative weeks, such as that based on South Africa, enrich and extend pupils' learning, as does the wide variety of visits, visitors and after-school clubs. Good links with other local schools include a project to develop writing skills and one to improve achievement in science and information and communication technology (ICT). This is useful as the science curriculum is not sufficiently focused on developing higher-level investigative skills. Joint activities with a nearby school and a link with a local sports college enhance the opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good attention to pupils' well-being and a caring, supportive family atmosphere help pupils to feel safe and confident in school. A recent commitment to the Healthy Schools initiative is raising pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating, although this is at a relatively early stage of development. All of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 have been trained as peer mediators and play an important role in sorting out problems between pupils. Well-planned support for pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make steady progress towards their targets. Close links with pupils' families and courses for parents help them to support their children's learning. The good systems

for tracking pupils' academic progress are helping to raise standards but are relatively new and have not yet had their full impact throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has taken prompt and decisive action to tackle the significant weaknesses identified by the last inspection. Rigorous evaluation of the school's performance has involved staff and governors in identifying and tackling the causes of underachievement. This has resulted in good improvement which has, in turn, boosted staff morale and increased parents' confidence in the school. A large number of parents wrote to inspectors to express their delight at the improvements that have been made over the past six months and to commend the acting headteacher and staff for their efforts. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go. Although there is now a clear management structure, the acting headteacher has too many key curricular responsibilities. Subject leaders have clear action plans but most are at an early stage of implementing these. Good teamwork between the acting headteacher and the new chair of governors has helped to keep governors, many of whom have joined the governing body in the past 12 months, abreast of developments.

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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?	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	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	2
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	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	3
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	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?	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?	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	2
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

- We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We think your school has improved a lot during the last year and your parents think so too. It is now giving you a satisfactory education and it is improving all the time. This is mostly because your acting headteacher has worked very hard with the teachers and governors to help you do better. They have introduced many good ideas, such as the way they set targets for you and check your progress every term. These haven't been in place very long and we think that some of you could still do better. You told us that you enjoy learning and do lots of exciting things. This is because the teachers have planned interesting themes and topics as well as special weeks, visitors and clubs. All of the adults take good care of you and help you to feel safe. You behave well, listen carefully to your teachers and work hard. We were impressed by the way the older pupils take care of the younger children and the way the school council has helped to make playtime more fun for everyone. We were pleased to see how much improvement the school has made in a year and have asked the teachers and governors to do a few things to help you make even better progress:
- Help a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 to reach higher standards in reading and maths, and a few of the older pupils to achieve higher levels in science.
- Make sure that all of the teachers know exactly what you need to learn next in each lesson so that you always make good progress.
- Involve all the teachers more in running the school and share out the responsibilities so that your acting headteacher doesn't have quite so many things to do. We are sure you will help your teachers to make the school even better.