

Kingsmead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100250
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307337
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Khaldi
Headteacher	Ms Louise Nichols
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Kingsmead Way London E9 5PP
Telephone number	020 8985 5779
Fax number	020 8985 9775

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kingsmead is an average sized primary school which is oversubscribed. It serves an ethnically and socially diverse area. The main groups represented are pupils of Black British African and Caribbean origin. There are significant numbers of Turkish pupils and travellers. Several other ethnicities are represented in smaller numbers. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is high. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The number of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, and behavioural and emotional difficulties is above average. The proportion of pupils starting and leaving the school other than at expected times is high. Kingsmead has received a number of national awards including the Quality Mark for Basic Skills, the Healthy Schools' Award, the Bronze Arts Mark and the foundation level International Schools' Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kingsmead is a good school that is held in very high regard by both pupils and the overwhelming majority of parents. The school's vision that, 'Kingsmead is a school for its community where children come first,' clearly is being fully realised. As one parent wrote, 'This is a happy school with a lot of respect in the community'.

Pupils' achievement is good because they have positive attitudes to learning, and teaching is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. As one pupil commented, 'This is a brilliant school'. Attendance is improving and behaviour is good.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low basic skills and many display delayed language development and a limited grasp of number. Effective teaching across the Foundation Stage provides opportunities for children to make rapid progress especially in their physical and creative development. However, on entry to Year 1 they have below the expected levels of skills, particularly in aspects of literacy and numeracy. In 2007 standards at the end of Year 2 were close to average in reading, writing and mathematics reflecting a gradual rise over recent years and pupils' good progress. In 2007 standards achieved in Year 6 were well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. Given the pupils starting points this was, nevertheless, good progress. Reading and writing standards are now improving, particularly with younger pupils, because specifically targeted interventions are improving their language skills. However, the development of reading skills is less effective with some older pupils and their progress slows. New reading interventions are addressing this underperformance but it is too early to measure their long-term impact. The school has clear and robust systems to track individual progress and intervention programmes are swiftly initiated to support specific pupils. Consequently, teaching is more focused, vibrant and well tuned to individual needs.

Personal development and well-being are good because pupils are treated as individuals, are actively engaged in improving the school and are well prepared for the challenges ahead. The leadership has created a strong 'can do culture' that has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. They are full partners in the life of the school and collaborate well in groups during lessons and at play. Their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to approach life's challenges are good. Life skills learned in activities such as Work Week, where pupils apply for, are interviewed and then appointed to run the school for a day, prepare them effectively for the future.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school meets all safeguarding regulations effectively. However, the marking policy is not implemented consistently and, as a result, not all pupils receive accurate and targeted guidance in how to improve their work or take the next step in their learning. Consequently, opportunities are often missed to develop pupils as independent learners. The curriculum is good and pupils have numerous opportunities to widen their experiences through stimulating visits, focus weeks and a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by her talented leadership team, has established a clear, sustainable vision and a strong drive to raise standards through improving teaching. Through targeted performance management and impressive staff training the momentum for improvement is well established. The school's excellent reputation in the community reflects the leadership's outstanding commitment to inclusion. The focus on shared leadership has a positive impact on staff morale and professional development.

Governance is good and governors are improving their capacity to challenge the school's leadership. With the school's robust drive for sustained improvement and the full commitment of the whole school community, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery make outstanding progress because they have opportunities to explore, have stimulating and practical activities such as the 'plants' theme, and time to practise activities such as counting spots on lady birds. The outdoor area is very well resourced. Children benefit from very good questioning and adults support learning very well. There is a good emphasis on language acquisition and the development of personal and social skills. Consequently, children, including those with limited English language skills, learn to communicate and socialise effectively. In Reception the children continue to make good progress. The good adult-led sessions develop early reading, writing and number skills well. However, activities and resources in the outdoor space are not always used effectively. Additional adults provide good support and they are committed to providing high quality care within a safe and stimulating learning environment. Planning is thorough and very good records of children's progress enable staff to challenge all children to build on their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading by introducing specific intervention programmes to targeted pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve teachers' marking so that pupils receive more frequent and effective guidance on how to take the next step in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, whatever their starting points, because the school has correctly focussed on improving standards, particularly in writing. Standards vary in different year groups since the number of pupils joining and leaving, other than at expected times, is significantly high. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve well below average standards in English, mathematics and science. A high proportion of this cohort has complex learning needs, and are making above expected progress from their starting points. Current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve average standards in reading and mathematics and above average standards in writing. Standards in reading across the school, though improving, lag behind those achieved in writing because intervention resources have been mainly focused on improving the reading and writing of younger pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language receive skilful and well-targeted support, so make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong and have a good understanding of other cultures. They have good attitudes to learning and relationships are good. Most pupils feel safe and know who to ask for help and feel they are listened to. Pupils are proud to represent their class on the school council and have made good suggestions for improving the playground resources and school

dinners. Pupils take part in a diverse range of extra curricular activities including sports, puzzle club, French, Spanish and art and design. These support their personal development well. Pupils' are becoming more confident in their basic skills which are contributing well to their future economic well-being. They make good contributions to the local community such as organising an international day to celebrate different cultures and raising suggestions to improve local road safety.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. As one parent said, 'The staff are very approachable and know my son well. He feels valued.' Consistent planning, tightly focused on raising standards, ensures pupils make effective progress. Pupils respond well, work hard and are eager to learn. In the best lessons learning is well paced, teachers use questioning to challenge and develop ideas, and have good subject knowledge. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils were thoroughly engaged in fast paced, problem solving tasks, and cheered when the teacher said they would continue this approach in the next lesson. Well planned activities help to develop pupils' social and thinking skills through opportunities to share ideas and explanations with 'talk partners'. End of lesson summary sessions are not always used to good effect and consequently opportunities for pupils' to reflect on their learning and assess their progress are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and pupils' enjoyment is very high. They particularly like science and mathematics lessons. As one pupil said, 'If I stay at home I wouldn't learn anything.' Pupils are provided with many creative opportunities through the International Primary Curriculum recently introduced to address local needs. Gifted and talented pupils receive extra challenge through carefully planned activities in lessons and beyond. Planning is thorough and caters well for the varied needs of all pupils who are encouraged to make choices in lessons but they are not yet confident as independent learners. The curriculum is enriched by fun days and sports tournaments and a good variety of school trips, such as to museums. Visits from theatre companies, the Fire Brigade, and the local Member of Parliament provide good opportunities for pupils to further their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and healthy environment. Child protection procedures are well established and risk assessments are thorough. New pupils' needs are identified early and extra support is swiftly actioned. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those whose first language is not English are provided with good support. Pupils' individual education plans are clear and provide attainable targets. The support of learning assistants and mentors is good. Links with external agencies to ensure pupils receive appropriate support are excellent. Assessment information is used to set targets, though some pupils are not consistently given guidance on how to achieve them. The marking policy is not implemented effectively.

Consequently, pupils do not receive regular and quality guidance about the next learning step. This limits their development as independent learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is very highly regarded within the community. One parent commented that 'the school has improved considerably' since her appointment. She has acted quickly and led the drive for improvement with perseverance and resolution. Consequently, standards are rising and pupils, many of whom have complex learning needs, make good progress. Well-planned transformations to the curriculum are beginning to enhance learning opportunities for pupils and are laying secure foundations for improved achievement. The school's self-evaluation is robust and weaknesses are swiftly addressed though monitoring of the impact of some initiatives is not sufficiently focused on outcomes for pupils. Subject leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses within their subjects. Governors provide a good balance between supporting and challenging the school's leadership and have a good understanding of the school. They have yet, however, to systematically track the impact of the school's actions on outcomes for pupils.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsmead Primary School, London, E9 5PP

You will remember that, recently, I and another inspector, spent two days observing you and the staff at work. We greatly appreciated the warm welcome extended to us by everyone and valued your helpful comments about your school and your education. This letter briefly explains our findings.

Kingsmead is a good school that is rightly respected by everyone in the community. In particular, things that impressed us include:

- your headteacher and the staff have worked hard to improve teaching so that your lessons are more challenging and stimulating
- you thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is improving
- you play an important part in improving your school
- in lessons you cooperate well and your skills in writing, mathematics and science are improving steadily
- you like the recent changes to the curriculum and lessons are more exciting and more suited to your interests
- we know that you are safe at school and feel confident in approaching staff if you have a problem.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to improve your school even more by:

- raising standards and the progress you make in your reading
- making sure that teachers' marking always gives you helpful tips on making the next step in your learning and to assist you in becoming more independent as learners.

We ask you to continue to work hard and carry on playing your part in helping the staff and governors to make Kingsmead a school of which you can be even more proud.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector