

Kennet Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109898
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	310138
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Clay
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Cockar
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Carters Rise Calcot Reading RG31 7YT
Telephone number	01189 414410
Fax number	01189 454891

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2008
Inspection number	310138

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. While pupils come from different backgrounds, the proportion eligible for a free school meal is below average. The pupils are predominantly White British, although there is a higher-than-average percentage of minority ethnic groups represented within the school. The number of pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. This includes a high proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need, including pupils with visual impairment and/or a physical disability. There are currently 18 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) who are taught in the Reception class. The school has successfully gained the Healthy School Award, Activemark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and was awarded Investors in People status. There is an on-site after school club that is run independently from the school.

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 provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. Most pupils start school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are below those expected nationally, particularly in language and social development. The headteacher, well supported by the governing body and a senior leadership team with two new members, has ensured increased rates of pupils' progress and raised achievement. As a result, overall standards are rising across the school and, in the current Year 6, they have improved compared with previous years and are at least in line with last year's national averages. Pupils are on course to reach targets that are more challenging than in recent years. Consequently, standards and achievement are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are good. There is a vibrant senior leadership team that is well supported by subject leaders throughout the school. This is an area of significant improvement for the school since the last inspection. There is a clear view of priorities and detailed action plans to support them. Procedures to monitor and evaluate progress are now in place and effective, leading to evidence of rising standards in all areas. Pupils and parents recognise that behaviour is much improved. It is now outstanding and is a factor in pupils' improved academic progress. The senior leadership team has been successful, having rightly concentrated on raising standards in basic skills. The governing body is knowledgeable, challenging and actively involved in monitoring the school effectively and consequently has an accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement. The school has recently tackled several issues, such as standards of attainment in writing, provision in the EYFS and behaviour, with obvious improvements evident in all of these areas as a result. The school has a good capacity to improve.

The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school and is satisfactory overall. There is some good and outstanding teaching, which has largely been responsible for improving standards, as well as the rate of progress made by pupils and their performance. However, there is still some inconsistency in the pace and challenge of lessons across classes. New teaching approaches are providing better opportunities for pupils to learn through work that is interesting and fun, but in some lessons the work provided for pupils is not matched sufficiently to their needs and abilities. This is particularly the case for more capable pupils, as they are not always being challenged well enough to extend their learning further in all classes. There are examples of excellent marking that provide pupils with clear indications of how to improve their work, but, again, this lacks consistency. Subjects are now being linked together to make learning more relevant for the pupils. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is rightly seen as important in giving the pupils the skills they will need in preparation for their future economic well-being.

Pupils say that they enjoy school and almost every parent agrees strongly with that view. The quality of care for the pupils is good and they feel valued. There is a genuine sense of community around the school. Pupils are able to make suggestions for improving the school, such as play equipment and the introduction of 'lunchtime buddies'. Behaviour has improved noticeably because of the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy. This is wholeheartedly endorsed by parents. Pupils take on responsibility for their own behaviour and also that of others, and work together well both within class and outside of it. This focus on pupils' individual responsibility is also extended to their work and particularly their progress. They respond well to their homework tasks, and these are followed up in class as an encouragement to every child. Systems for recording pupils' progress are much improved and are satisfactory. This allows the

staff to identify the next steps for improvement for each child. Teachers use assessment to provide learning targets for the pupils to achieve, but these are not yet being applied consistently enough to allow all pupils to have a clear view of how to improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is effective provision to help children to make a good start in the EYFS. Children enter with skills and abilities that are below those expected of four-year-olds, and they make good progress towards the learning goals expected of five-year-olds during their time in the Reception Year. In particular, they are helped to learn and develop communication, language and literacy skills well, which are at a particularly lower level on entry. Recent changes to the leadership of the EYFS have improved the way children are helped to learn and develop. The skilled staff provide well-planned indoor and outdoor activities that stimulate enjoyment and learning and that interest the children such as constructional and imaginative play, sequencing and pattern recognition, and opportunities to record their ideas. The welfare of children is promoted well and adults use assessment well to record children's progress and personal development towards independence and the skills of safe, cooperative play and work. They use a raised platform to gain access to an interactive electronic whiteboard, which allows them to offer a touch response under teacher guidance to displayed images. The personal development and well-being of the children are good, with an appropriate emphasis on their social and emotional development. Play settings are well used, for example children riding tricycles learned about traffic through a planned play situation created with some adult help, but also allowing for free-play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of the teaching to raise standards and improve achievement.
- Accelerate the progress of more able pupils by providing tasks in all lessons that are better matched to their needs and abilities.
- Ensure that teachers' marking is of consistently high quality to provide pupils with better guidance for improvement.

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

Pupils start school in the Reception Year with abilities that are below what is typical for their age, and well below the level of four-year-olds in language and social skills. In the EYFS children make good progress, but standards overall remain below average when they enter Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 improved from 2004 to 2007 from well below average to above average. Standards dipped to below average again in 2008, but the pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their very low starting points. Similarly, at the end of Year 6 in 2008 standards dipped, but the pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their low starting points from the end of Year 2. Achievement overall was satisfactory and pupils made good progress in writing. Despite this, too few pupils reach the higher levels in national tests because in some lessons more able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive effective adult support and the match of work to their needs is good. From lesson observations and analyses of work,

pupils in Year 2 and particularly Year 6 are on track to achieve significantly higher standards this academic year. In Year 2 pupils are currently achieving just below national expectations, but in Year 6 standards are now in line with national expectations because of recent good progress. This represents a significant upturn in pupils' performance as a result of effective leadership that is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance rates are higher than the national average. All children enjoy school a good deal, as demonstrated by their very high standards of behaviour, positive attitudes and good attendance. They feel safe, possess an outstanding moral outlook and have a deep sense of community. The pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and is supported well when they take time to reflect in assemblies, and in the care they show for others. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and engage in physical exercise. They are able to talk confidently about their participation in the school and have a developing voice through surveys and the house system. There is a strong sense of citizenship and care for others, as well as a broader outlook, evidenced by charitable drives and fund-raising. Pupils are developing a range of other skills that contribute satisfactorily to their economic well-being. ICT is an emerging strength, which is helping pupils to improve their skills and attitudes to learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers plan thoughtfully to make learning interesting and fun. Lessons have clear objectives that are made known to pupils right from the start. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use well-prepared resources and make effective use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms to support learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well to help those who need additional support with reading, writing or mathematics. In the best lessons, work is matched closely to the pupils' ability levels and the pace of learning is slick. However, this is not always the case and this is why the quality of teaching is variable. In the outstanding lessons, pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve and this means that they are able to assess their own learning and progress, as in an ICT lesson in Year 6. There are examples of good quality marking by teachers, but in some classes the marking is less helpful in indicating to the pupils their next steps for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum has been adapted to reflect the changes to single-age class organisation. The curriculum is good and reflects the new arrangements and new initiatives introduced by the leadership team. There is a good balance of time between subjects, and an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, together with gradually developing links to other subjects. The school has developed an assessment language for pupils that is centred on the terms 'must', 'should' and 'could', which provides clear targets for the pupils to aim towards in lessons. Information and communication technology is developing well, supported by the resource of a specialist network room, classroom writing stations and interactive whiteboards. French is taught from

Year 3 to Year 6 and pupils are now developing useful skills for later in life. The school offers good programmes of citizenship and personal, social, moral and health education that teach children how to stay healthy and safe. Pupils have regular opportunities to contribute to and to take on charitable and other responsibilities in the community that support their sense of economic well-being. The after-school club provides a wide range of out-of-hours activities, enhancing the school's provision of extended services.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a high level of pastoral care. Pupils' welfare and safety have a high priority and there are appropriate steps taken to ensure procedures for child protection, anti-racism and anti-bullying are implemented. The recent anti-bullying week was particularly successful and was followed up in an assembly during the inspection. As a result of these procedures, pupils say that they feel valued, safe, well supported and that they enjoy school. These views are supported by the overwhelming majority of parents. One said, 'I have three children at the school who all thoroughly enjoy attending and who have all made really good progress.' Attendance is well above the national average because it is monitored closely, with the school working well with the education welfare service. Pupils' progress is now being tracked in all subject areas and this is helping staff to identify pupils who need extra support. Pupils' targets, set to raise their achievement, are becoming well established and are shared with pupils, but this is not yet consistent practice in every class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has a very strong senior leadership team with two new key members joining the staff this year. They are well supported by subject leaders, whose leadership and management roles have improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a clear focus on raising standards through the identification of clear, manageable priorities and detailed plans to support them. As a result, the current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve significantly higher results than last year. Assessments are more accurate than previously and consequently the tracking of pupils' progress is more rigorous and informative. This has enabled staff to set appropriate targets for pupils to improve their work, but these are not yet applied consistently in lessons across all classes. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and there is a shared sense of working towards a society with common vision and values. The school is inclusive with a sense of its place within the local community and wider national and international contexts, and it celebrates and evaluates its contributions thoughtfully to continue strengthening the importance of this aspect of its work. There are good links with other local providers and support services. Governance is good because governors are well informed, actively involved and care deeply about the school. They provide good levels of challenge and have a clear view of the strengths of the school and the priorities for improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

08 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kennet Valley Primary School, Reading, RG31 7YT

Thank you for making the inspectors welcome and talking to us so openly when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed the lessons we visited, looking at your work and joining you during lunch and playtimes.

We found these things from our visit.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and we agree with you, and your parents, when you say that the school is improving in all sorts of ways. You told us that the staff care for you and we agree. We were impressed by your behaviour and the fact that you clearly enjoy coming to school. You work hard and help each other. Many of you are also working hard with your homework.

We have asked your teachers and the governors to do the following things to make the school even better:

- make sure that you receive good teaching in every lesson, so that you reach higher standards in English and mathematics
- plan lessons so that all of you are presented with a challenge in your work
- give you even better guidance on how to improve when the teachers mark your work.

Please keep working hard and enjoying the many things that you do at Kennet Valley Primary School. We would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Grimshaw

Lead Inspector