

Kensington Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112573
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310928
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Frank Phillips
Headteacher	Mrs Lindsey Partridge
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	St John's Road Ilkeston Derbyshire DE7 5PA
Telephone number	0115 9322920
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kensington Junior School is an average sized school, situated in the town of Ilkeston in Derbyshire. It has served the local community for 120 years. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with average levels of attainment. Most pupils are of White British background. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low. No pupils with English as an additional language currently attend the school. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is broadly average. An average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kensington Junior is a school with much to celebrate and some significant strengths. Its effectiveness is satisfactory overall because the full impact of some important changes and exciting recent developments has yet to be felt. Standards by Year 6 are average, and pupils' progress between Years 3 and 6 is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make sound progress. There has been steady improvement in overall standards since the last inspection.

A major key to the school's improvement is the work of the relatively new leadership team. It is demonstrating good strategies to raise achievement, and is supported well by subject coordinators and governors. Leaders, at all levels, are determined to ensure pupils make better progress. Staff work well as a team and have established some firm foundations for improvement. Development planning shows the school has an accurate understanding of its areas for improvement. Its occasionally optimistic understanding of its strengths is a result of its readiness to embrace change. The quality of evaluation and planning indicate a good capacity for improving further pupils' learning and achievement.

The school understands well the importance of establishing the right ethos for learning. Care and guidance, and particularly pastoral support, are good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure. Consequently, these factors underpin well the pupils' good personal development. Attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils want to come to school because they know it has something positive and interesting to offer them. Most pupils have smiles on their faces and many told inspectors they have fun whilst learning. Working relationships are good. The school celebrates readily the achievements of its pupils and clearly values both them and their work.

Leadership and management are good. The school has been successful in enhancing the professionalism of its staff. Teachers respond readily to new initiatives such as the curriculum review which has taken place over the past year. Consequently, the curriculum is now good and meets better the needs and interests of the pupils. Links between subjects are being established which not only make learning more relevant but also support well the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Learning and teaching are satisfactory overall. In the better lessons, pupils are challenged well to think for themselves, but in some, they have too few opportunities to work independently. The use of assessment and targets to raise pupils' achievement is not sufficiently consistent, but teachers are already working collaboratively to improve this.

The school has worked hard to establish good links with parents and the local community. Its good reputation is justified fully by the response of parents, as one wrote, 'I feel that the school's vision, and clear commitment to improvement, has been very evident, and pupils' and parent/carers' views are religiously sought.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all pupils are challenged purposefully in lessons, and involved more actively in directing their own learning.
- Ensure all teachers make effective use of assessment and targets to guide teaching, and focus more clearly on the development of pupils' key skills and independence.

A small proportion of 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

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. When pupils enter the school, standards are average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their time at the school and standards by Year 6 are average, with an overall trend of improvement since the last inspection. Provisional results for the 2007 national tests confirm these standards. The school has recovered successfully from the dip seen in 2006, when there was underachievement in mathematics, and by some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is not complacent about the rate of progress made by pupils and, in concentrating on their writing, mental arithmetic skills and investigation work in science, has identified the key areas for improvement. These are being coupled with the more extended use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Systems for checking pupils' progress in the core subjects, and intervention where necessary, are robust. However, the use of targets for individual pupils, right across the range of ability and including those with a special educational need, still needs to be more challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. They are growing into confident and well-rounded young people. Pupils behave well and follow the school rules, which they helped to review. They move around the school in a safe and orderly manner. Pupils get on well with each other and the school staff. Interesting and thought provoking school assemblies are used well to enhance their spiritual development. Pupils know how to keep healthy and understand the importance of exercise and diet. Pupils' good personal development and satisfactory key skills contribute soundly to their future well-being. The work of the school and class councils makes an effective contribution to the school community. These have been proactive in making improvements to the school grounds, including the redesign of the playground. Older pupils take on readily special responsibilities, such as supporting younger ones through the 'Playground Pals' scheme. Pupils give good support to the wider community through fundraising and participation in local events. They have a sound understanding of other cultures, and a recent themed week was much enjoyed by the pupils. The school has been successful in reducing significantly the absence rates of pupils with previously poor attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst inspectors saw both examples of good and satisfactory teaching, the overall quality of teaching, and its impact on learning, is satisfactory. Inspectors therefore differ from the school's own evaluation of these areas. In the most effective lessons, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to communicate well with all pupils. Questions are used effectively to assess pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. Where the teaching is satisfactory, lessons do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to make progress in their learning because activities are sometimes too heavily directed by the teacher. Occasionally teachers simply talk too much.

Teachers and teaching assistants provide a caring and supportive environment for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, staff do not always develop sufficiently the independent learning of pupils in their care. Consequently, more able pupils are not always consistently or suitably challenged, but their progress is satisfactory overall. Marking guidelines are clear but teachers do not always use marking consistently or rigorously to identify the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Work for the current year is planned well and makes learning exciting and relevant. The school has worked hard on improvements over the past year and monitors carefully the effectiveness of its new initiatives. Learning is improving because pupils are seeing relevant links between subjects. Inspectors saw good links with religious education in English, information and communication technology within science, and between history, geography and music. Good use is made of 'themed' weeks and days, as well as visits and other extra-curricular activities, to bring learning to life. One parent wrote, 'I have been impressed by the combination of subjects cleverly disguised as fun in this fabulous week.' There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe and to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The staff invest significant time and effort in developing good working relationships with the pupils, whom they know well. The headteacher takes a strong lead in this, forging secure relationships with pupils and their parents. As a result, the personal development and well-being of pupils are promoted effectively. Exclusions are rare, and always for good reason. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, well-being and safety, including child protection, are securely in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported carefully, and as a result make sound progress. There is good liaison with a range of other schools and support agencies to help ensure pupils' needs are met, including the gifted and talented. There have been good improvements in the procedures for tracking pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management at the school reflect its good teamwork. There is a thoroughly professional enthusiasm and commitment on the part of staff. This is appreciated by all as being essential to securing school improvement. Most of the senior leadership team are relatively new in post, but relish the challenge and opportunities offered by their responsibilities. There is a well-justified up-beat atmosphere within the school. Evaluation has identified correctly key areas for development, including the need to increase pupils' progress and their independence in learning. However, other aspects of self-evaluation are a little over-optimistic, particularly regarding learning and overall effectiveness. This is because the school sometimes looks at itself in a local rather than a national context. Nevertheless, monitoring systems are robust and target setting arrangements are satisfactory. However, the school's use of targets to raise the level of challenge for pupils is not yet developed sufficiently. Governance is good because governors play a most supportive and informed role and are helpful,

critical friends to the school. The school is prudent in its spending on resources, uses these well to support learning, and thus provides good value for money. Good links exist between the school's leaders and parents. The headteacher has been particularly good in fostering such community links. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and facing up squarely to any barriers to learning. Overall, the school is now poised very well to take the next step towards further school improvement.

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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?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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.

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	3
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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kensington Junior School, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, DE7 5PA

We would like to thank you all for welcoming us so warmly during our two days at your school. You helped us to understand why you enjoy your learning and are keen to come to school. We were impressed that the smiles on your faces continued throughout the day. Yours is a school which has much to celebrate.

These are the things we found are best about your school.

- Together with your teachers and staff, you make the school a welcoming place.
- You behave well, pay attention in class, and enjoy being involved in learning.
- You are friendly and play an active part in your school and community life.
- Your teachers are helping you to make important links between subjects, so that you can learn more and make better progress.
- Your teachers are very determined to continue to help you to improve.

By Year 6, most of you have made satisfactory progress. We agree with your teachers' ideas to help you make even better progress. This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Enable you to become more involved in lessons by giving you increasing challenges in your work, to help you achieve even better.
- Develop further the ways in which your teachers mark and assess your work, set your targets and help you to know how to improve.

In one of your assemblies, we appreciated your understanding of 'TEAM' work 'Together Everyone Achieves More'. You too can play an important part in helping your school to become even more successful by continuing to work as a team.

With all best wishes for your future.

Michael Miller (Lead inspector)

Ian Jones (Team inspector)