

Kenton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113204
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311152
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Amanda Somerwill
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Mamhead Road Kenton Exeter EX6 8LX
Telephone number	01626 890465
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of systems to track progress and how these are used to decide on actions to raise standards in writing and ensure that improvements in mathematics become embedded in practice
- the outcomes of provision for the Every Child Matters agenda, particularly in relation to healthy lifestyles, in order to confirm pupils' personal development and well-being as a strength of the school
- whether clear direction has been set for improvement by the headteacher and the contribution of all staff, as well as leadership and management, in raising standards and driving the school forward.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils attend this small school from the local village and surrounding area. A relatively high percentage of pupils move into and out of the school during the school year. Attainment on entry into Reception varies from year to year but is broadly in line with age-related expectations, although attainment in early writing skills is below that expected. The headteacher took up post in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides a good education for its pupils in a lively and stimulating learning environment. Parents particularly appreciate the very good communication between home and school and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One comment reflected the opinions of many: 'The school provides a secure and safe environment to encourage fun and enjoyment in learning'.

The school is constantly striving to improve the provision made for its pupils. Children in the Reception class get off to a good start because teaching is good and interesting activities are matched well to their needs. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average and achievement in these areas is good. The drive to improve mathematics, by increasing the emphasis on pupils using their skills to solve problems independently, has been very successful and standards have risen accordingly. The school has more recently focused on improving the standards in writing and this too, to a large degree, has been successful. However, spelling is not as good as it should be. The school has taken positive action to remedy this and introduced well-constructed programmes to teach specific spelling skills from Reception to Year 4. This is already having a positive impact on writing lower down the school. However, in Years 5 and 6, although the quality of writing content is high and good imagery is used to support original and interesting ideas, spelling is a weaker element and this prevents some pupils from achieving the higher National Curriculum Level 5. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is checked carefully. This means there is speedy identification of any problems that may occur and swift action taken to remedy them. Pupils who are particularly gifted or talented achieve well because their progress is monitored carefully and care is taken to ensure they are appropriately challenged.

When the headteacher joined the school in January, she swiftly identified the curriculum as being in need of review, in order to make it more relevant to the pupils and sustain their motivation to learn. In consultation with staff, a thematic approach has been introduced, with a good range of visits and visitors to widen pupils' experiences. There is an emphasis on a wide variety of writing which successfully supports the current whole-school focus in this area. Excellent links are made across a range of subjects and the use of information and communication technology is fully integrated into all topics. As a result, pupils bubbled with enthusiasm as they explained how much they enjoy their learning. 'The Colours of the Continents' was a school-wide project which enabled pupils not only to explore art in two and three dimensions, but also to gain a very good understanding of different cultures. The resultant displays are vibrant and exciting and illustrates well how pupils' work and efforts are valued and appreciated. Pupils are nurtured, and the care and support provided for them are excellent. A comprehensive programme for their personal, social and health education contributes very effectively to their outstanding personal development.

Pupils learn effectively because they are interested and motivated by the activities provided by their teachers. There is a good emphasis on practical and investigative activities which stimulate pupils' imagination. In mixed age group classes, teachers are particularly successful at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. Teachers use resources such as interactive whiteboards skilfully to make explanations clearer and lessons more exciting. Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers and their behaviour is exemplary. This means that teachers can successfully inject humour into lessons knowing that this will not cause disruption.

In addition, it enables them to plan a wide range of activities, confident that all pupils will be purposefully employed even when not directly supervised. Pupils respond to questions thoughtfully and are encouraged to explore and share ideas with each other. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carefully edited their biographies of Florence Nightingale, in preparation for them being posted on the 'web'. As a result, this work was of a very high quality. However, pupils are not always sufficiently involved in checking and editing their own work, which means that they do not identify careless mistakes, for example in spelling. Older pupils say marking helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work and targets are especially useful in identifying their next steps in learning.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assemblies. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their improved attendance, which is now good. They are considerate in their dealings with each other. The playground is a happy and harmonious area. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Nearly all pupils have a school meal each day. They extol the talents of the local restaurateur, who also acts as the school's chef in providing a wide range of healthy and appetising food. They recognise that they have a responsibility to others and proudly relate their involvement in 'Make a Difference Week' when, amongst other things, they gave a performance to the elderly of the village, cooking and providing the cakes and biscuits for the tea afterwards. The school council is very active and pupils enthusiastically participated in the interviews to appoint the headteacher. They are very aware of environmental concerns and have visited land-fill sites and designed and made their own 'bags for life'. Their well-developed skills in numeracy and literacy and in collaborative working provide a good preparation for their future lives.

The headteacher's leadership is strong and purposeful. She has clearly demonstrated the ability to identify areas that require improvement and to initiate effective actions to do so, although the focus on writing has not yet had time to fully bear fruit. All teachers are subject leaders. They make a good contribution and are fully involved in decision-making. There is a strong feeling of working together as a team and a culture has evolved where teachers share good practice and support each other. Staff and governors know how well the school is doing, share a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further and have a good capacity to bring these improvements about. The school uses data well to check its own performance and set challenging targets. A robust monitoring system is in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The governors provide good support and challenge and have been fully involved in the strategic development of the school, although some are new to the role. The school improvement plan and subject plans provide a good basis for ongoing improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class make good progress, and the majority join Year 1 having reached the standards appropriate for their age. However, a significant minority are still working towards the goals expected in their literacy and early writing skills. The school has quickly identified this and a good emphasis is put on the development of writing skills as a result. Teaching is lively and interesting and activities are carefully planned using the Early Years Curriculum for children in this mixed age group class. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Visits and visitors, as well as lively, interesting themes, make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting. The care and

attention given to children's welfare are good. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and show a very good understanding of the needs of young children.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' spelling skills in order to raise standards in writing
- take action to eradicate careless mistakes by involving pupils more consistently in the assessment and checking of their own work.

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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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	1
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?	1

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

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the activities in which you are involved. I think your school gives you a good education and is working hard to make it even better.

- These are the things I liked best:
 - you behave very well and are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning
 - you are all doing very well in reading and mathematics
 - you take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise
 - teachers make learning fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting
 - you have a varied curriculum and your learning themes are really exciting and interesting for you. Your work from the 'Colours of the Continents' project is stunning
 - the teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school
 - your headteacher and governors lead the school very well and are very keen to make it even better.
- I think that a very few things could be even better:
 - your writing is often lively and interesting but your spelling is not as good as it should be
 - you need to be given more opportunities to check and edit your own work, to ensure that you learn to identify any unnecessary mistakes.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.