

# Kents Hill Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115008
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311789
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Drew

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	361
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jasmine Frost
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Natalie Sansom
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Kents Hill Road Benfleet Essex SS7 5PS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268792500
<b>Fax number</b>	01268795066

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Kents Hill is a larger than average junior school. The majority of pupils have favourable social and economic backgrounds, though fewer homes than average have experience of higher education. Standards on entry are above average. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with just a small percentage of the children from each of several ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is above average. The current headteacher has been in post for a year, prior to which an acting headteacher ran the school for a year.

## 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 correctly judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. Standards and achievement are recovering from a brief decline and so the school provides satisfactory value for money. Self-evaluation is good, directing the school towards key areas for improvement. Whilst pupils' longer term achievement is satisfactory, their current progress in lessons is good, because teaching quality has risen and is now generally good. The school's good capacity for further improvement reflects these immediate gains as well as other changes, such as the development of a stronger leadership team and the growing sense of confidence and accountability amongst subject leaders and governors. Whilst leadership and management as a whole are satisfactory, the current headteacher's vision and high expectations are good: she leads well and has gained strong support from the whole staff. Governors have worked hard to strengthen their monitoring and support, and this approach now needs to be fully embedded in order to secure the recent improvements that have been made.

Standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory overall. Science standards are above average but standards in English, especially in writing, and in mathematics vary considerably. However, both subjects now show sustainable recovery as good subject leadership begins to improve pupils' performance. Nevertheless, teachers' checking of pupils' progress and their setting of targets to raise attainment, especially for the school's more able pupils, are still not sufficiently systematic or rigorous.

Effective monitoring by senior staff, better assessment practice and curricular changes have helped teaching and learning improve significantly during the last 12 months. Although teaching and learning are good overall, there is outstanding practice in several classes. Typically, planning is clear, the pace is good and assessment is used well. In the best lessons, pace is excellent and pupils are engrossed in their work. Occasionally low level inattention is dealt with too slowly by staff. Pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities have long had strong classroom support and achieved well. This is now true of the majority of pupils in each class. However, though the most able pupils generally make satisfactory progress, they do not always make the progress that they should, because teachers sometimes allow them opt for tasks that do not match their abilities.

Personal development has been good in the school for many years and despite a temporary rise in challenging behaviour last year the school has re-established a very positive atmosphere where good behaviour, above average attendance and pleasant relationships prevail. Pupils show a good awareness of personal safety, health issues and are keen to contribute to their school and community. Rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly by the school. Moral and social development are good, while the school rightly evaluates spiritual and cultural development as satisfactory. Strong personal development reflects the school's good care, guidance and support for pupils. Aspects of its care are very effective and it meets all requirements for safeguarding pupils. Academic monitoring is improving and is now satisfactory.

Improvements are taking place in the curriculum which is satisfactory at present. It has been redesigned and the early impact on lessons has been to allow greater flexibility for pupils and staff. Extra curricular sport, including swimming, are strengths of the school. The school has satisfactory and improving links with other schools. Furthermore, most parents appreciate and value recent improvements that the school has made. There is, however, scope to harness

parents' support even more strongly by improving communications so that all parents understand what the school is trying to achieve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards further, especially in writing and mathematics, by making target setting and progress checking consistently regular and rigorous.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers direct able pupils to suitably challenging tasks.
- Make sure the Governing Body monitors the school closely and provides strong support, especially to the schools leaders and managers.
- Ensure communication with parents successfully conveys the school's recent improvements and engages the support of all parents in the drive to improve standards and quality.

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**

Standards are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. English, mathematics and science standards were above average for several years but results in 2007 fell below the national average in mathematics and English. Although the Year group had a lower than average starting point, pupils still gained fewer high levels scores than expected, especially in writing. Current performance in both subjects is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average and improving, because there have been marked improvements in teaching in the last 12 months, there has been better tracking of pupils' progress and a return to positive attitudes amongst older pupils. Achievement is now satisfactory and gaining momentum. Current progress in lessons is good and occasionally outstanding, but this has yet to have its full impact on standards over time. Attainment in science has remained consistently above average and pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities have made good progress for many years, because the leadership of both areas is well organised and spreads confidence to staff as a whole. Able pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points but the school is right to focus on raising expectations further and on setting challenging targets for these pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They thoroughly enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They behave well in classrooms and in the playground, showing respect and care for each other. Attendance has risen recently from an average to an above average level. Pupils are developing a good awareness of safe and healthy lifestyles, drawing well on the high priority given to exercise, sport and a good diet. Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and they now have a better understanding of British cultural diversity than at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils are keen to take responsibility and the older ones in particular contribute well to the school and wider community. This was demonstrated in the excellent response of pupils in Year 6 to the election of head boy, head girl and house captains. Candidates spoke eloquently of how they wanted to help the school, drawing on their previous experiences on the school

council. The combination of sound academic skills and their positive social attitudes equip pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and their future lives in the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching, learning and progress are now good, reflecting improvements over the last twelve months. This has been achieved by a variety of strategies: good monitoring by the headteacher and subject leaders, a closer match of the new curriculum to pupils' needs and more sharing of good practice. The highly skilled work of teaching assistants also contributes to this success. Planned work is adapted well to the needs of most pupils, especially lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. However, there is less consistency in directing able pupils to challenging tasks. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of what is to be learnt and share this with pupils. This has increased pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The good relationships and personal development of pupils make lessons effective and enjoyable. This, along with lively, stimulating classrooms and effective use of whiteboards ensures pupils increasingly learn in active and practical ways. Teachers effectively discuss how well pupils feel they have met a lesson's 'success criteria' and what that tells them about how to improve. The quality of feedback given through marking varies considerably. There are examples of very good practice, but this is not consistent across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school correctly judges its curriculum as satisfactory. It has identified limitations in the previous curriculum and considerable progress has been made in reshaping it. For example, basic skills are now being taught systematically across all subjects, and subjects are being linked together more creatively. There is stronger emphasis on teaching literacy, mathematics, science and information and communications technology (ICT). More focus has been placed on developing pupils' speaking, listening and communication skills which helps them to express their views and ideas clearly. These changes are making learning more stimulating and improving progress in lessons but have not had long enough to improve long term achievement. A good range of support is in place, helping lower attaining pupils to achieve well. Displays in classrooms and around the school, as well as opportunities to visit places of interest, enrich the curriculum well. The strong emphasis on physical education, after-school activities and the very good use of the school's swimming pool all contribute to the success the school enjoys in sporting events. The particularly good range of after school clubs are highly valued by pupils and very well supported.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral care is of high quality and appreciated by pupils and their parents. They refer for example, to the recent good arrangements to support pupils transferring from the infant school. The school is vigilant in safeguarding its pupils. The rare incidents of bullying or racism are taken seriously and followed up well. There is good individual support for pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, effective training for

the teaching assistants who help these pupils and increasingly good attention to the needs of all lower attaining pupils. Academic guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory and improving. Pupils are generally clear about the targets set for them in their group work, though less certain about individual targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Overall, leadership and management have a satisfactory impact on standards and achievement. There is evidence of recent improvement, much of it stemming from strong, clear leadership by the relatively new headteacher. She has succeeded in halting a decline in standards and raising teaching quality through effective monitoring and support of her staff. She has sustained good personal development by pupils during a phase of staff turbulence. Subject and Year group leaders are adopting a role which gives them greater accountability for standards. They make a satisfactory and improving contribution to the school's work, though learning difficulties and/or disabilities and science are already led very effectively. Governors know their school well. Their support for and monitoring of the senior staff has recently improved, following a recent phase when both were too limited. The governing body now plays a satisfactory role overall. The capacity for further improvement is good as demonstrated in recent changes, which have already had a beneficial effect. Longer term strategies such as those involving the curriculum and assessment for learning are also beginning to have an effect and the experience and impact of leaders at every level is stronger than when the headteacher took office.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	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**

17 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kents Hill Junior School, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5PS.

Thank you for making us welcome during last week's inspection. We enjoyed our visit because many things are going well at the school:

1. Your behaviour is good and your attitudes very positive.
2. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding.
3. You are making good progress in lessons.
4. The headteacher leads the school well.
5. The standards that you reach in science and the support for those of you who have particular learning difficulties and/ or disabilities are both good.
6. The school gives you good care, guidance and support.

If the school is to get even better it should:

1. Help you to reach higher standards in mathematics and writing, by setting even more demanding targets for you.
2. Make sure that teachers set work in all of your lessons that challenges all of you, especially those of you who are reaching higher levels.
3. Make sure that your parents are told about the improvements happening in school and what the school is trying to achieve.
4. Make sure the governors check the work of the school very carefully and help school leaders to press on with the improvements that they are making.

Best wishes

Robert Drew

Lead Inspector