

Kendall C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115064
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311809
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Oliver
Headteacher	Mrs Rosemarie Sadler (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
School address	Recreation Road Colchester Essex CO1 2HH
Telephone number	01206 794634
Fax number	01206 790545

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and of them, a few speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below average and is often particularly low in communication, language and literacy. In some year groups a large proportion of pupils join or leave the school partway through this phase of their education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Under the very good leadership of the acting headteacher, there has been a substantial improvement since the last inspection a year ago. Pupils' achievement has improved in all year groups. It is now satisfactory and sometimes good. As a result, standards are beginning to rise. Due to underachievement in the past, there are still many gaps in pupils' learning but these are being identified accurately and rectified rapidly. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and some is good. There is an urgency about the teaching as teachers work hard to bring standards up to the levels that pupils are capable of attaining. Although faster learners are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, they are capable of more. Teachers in Years 1 to 4 do not always expect enough of this group and sometimes pupils are not fully stretched.

By Year 6, pupils attain average standards in literacy, numeracy and science. Writing is developing as a particular strength. Pupils in Year 6 wrote powerful pieces about grandmothers, 'Granny is a whirring, whining time machine run purely on sweet tea.' However, pupils' spelling is often inaccurate because spelling rules have not been taught systematically. Throughout the school, teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support teaching and learning. By Year 6, pupils have developed a good range of computer skills. Computers are not used enough in Years 1 and 2 to support learning across the curriculum.

Pupils are bubbling with enthusiasm and are full of good humour. They develop into confident learners. Their good personal development and the range of skills that they develop across the curriculum provide them with a sound foundation for entering the next phase of their education. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They report that they feel safe and secure in school and would feel comfortable about sharing any concerns with their teachers or support staff. Pupils have challenging targets to aim for in literacy and numeracy that help to accelerate their progress. The curriculum has an appropriately strong focus on the basic skills of reading and writing, using a themed, topic-based approach, which stimulates pupils' interests well.

Nearly all the teachers are new to the school and the re-invigorated senior leadership team has given a renewed impetus to improvement. Pupils and parents greatly appreciate how much the school has improved over the past year. The acting headteacher, together with her dynamic new deputy, have great ambitions for the school and share a determination to strive for excellence. The new senior management team is beginning to have a marked impact and provision is improving steadily. The governing body, ably led by the chair, has taken a firm grip on monitoring the school's performance much more rigorously. They have been instrumental in achieving improvements on many fronts. Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'I am delighted with how much the school has improved over the past year...morale is high, and children are well-motivated and are happy to come to school.' Governors are still seeking to appoint a permanent headteacher and are resolute in implementing rigorous procedures to make sure that a successful appointment is made. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and helps to identify exactly where improvements are still needed. The school is now better placed to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into the Reception class where the staff work closely together to provide good teaching. There is a rigorous programme of teaching children the link between letters and the sounds that they make. Consequently, they get a flying start in learning to read and write. Children are enthusiastic learners and make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception year most have reached the nationally expected levels. Communication, language and literacy remain relatively weak because many children entered the school with low starting points. Imaginative teaching, such as dressing in Indian clothes, listening to Indian music, making Rangoli patterns and cooking halwa cakes as part of their study of Divali, capture children's imaginations. Some resources, such as the installation of an interactive whiteboard, are good but generally the classroom has suffered from a lack of investment and facilities are old and worn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenge for the faster learners in Years 1 to 4 so that they make even better progress and attain the highest possible standards.
- Improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to use computers to support their learning.
- Provide more resources for children in the Foundation Stage so that a more colourful, vibrant learning environment can be established.

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, including those who find learning difficult or who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Children's achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and most attain the nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and it is good in literacy because early reading and writing skills are taught methodically. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Many pupils make particularly good progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do really well to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6 because they have had to do a lot of catching up, caused by a legacy of underachievement in the past. However, pupils' spelling is not accurate enough. Pupils' progress is monitored rigorously, such as for those who join the school at different times, in order to identify any who are not making the progress expected and where improvements are needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships amongst pupils and staff are friendly and this supports pupils' learning well. Everybody says that behaviour has improved dramatically and that an aura of purpose and productivity has been established.

Behaviour is good. Staff give plenty of praise and encouragement, which helps pupils to develop good levels of self-esteem. There is a growing feeling of confidence and pupils are developing self-belief in their abilities as learners. Pupils are eager to please and keen to learn. They are courteous and have sensible attitudes to work. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have a good appreciation about staying safe and of healthy lifestyles. They increasingly understand the need for a balanced diet and for exercise. Good quality sports coaching is helping school teams begin to win matches and this is contributing to pupils' enhanced self-esteem and their growing contribution to the school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers' planning is mostly detailed and thorough. The teaching encourages pupils to express their opinions and they grasp every opportunity to make their views known. This freedom has helped to improve pupils' communication skills. Many of the older pupils are highly articulate and talk sensibly about their work. Tasks are now better modified to meet the needs of pupils' widely varying stages of development. However, the teaching does not always focus enough on high quality outcomes, such as good presentation of work and does not always expect enough from the faster learners in Years 1 to 4. Marking has improved and now shows pupils what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and they are particularly skilled at supporting pupils with learning difficulties and those new to the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school rightly places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy to raise standards. It gives ample time to other subjects. Pupils are intrigued by history projects. For example, The Great Fire of London has gripped the pupils' imaginations in Years 1 and 6. Pupils are also fascinated by the Ancient Egyptians. The visual and performing arts are well represented. Visitors and visits to places of interest add another dimension to pupils' learning and residential trips for older pupils extend their personal experiences well. There is a good range of after school activities that enrich pupils' learning, including a choir, French and gardening. Younger pupils have too few opportunities to use computers to develop their skills in information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff are very caring and pupils' safety is always a top priority. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. Child protection procedures are clearly understood and consistently implemented by all staff. Pupils receive good guidance about safety and how to lead healthy lifestyles. Academic guidance for pupils is also good and they know what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. Pupils who find learning difficult receive the support they need and make satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a renewed energy about the school and staff are all keen to work together to improve provision. The school maintains a determined drive to raise standards. A good system for measuring pupils' progress has been introduced. Challenging targets for progress expected each term are set and data is used well to determine if these targets have been achieved. Any underachievement is investigated and extra support provided where necessary. The school has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last report. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their responsibilities and are becoming increasingly effective. They monitor teachers' planning and keep a close watch on data about pupils' progress. They do not spend enough time examining pupils' work in order to identify areas for improvement. The governing body is well informed and now monitors the school's performance thoroughly. Governors have worked closely with the acting headteacher to bring about important improvements.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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	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?	3
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?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

1 December 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Kendall Primary School, Colchester, CO1 2HH.

I really enjoyed my short visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. There have been many improvements recently and you told me how pleased you are that the school has got so much better over the past year. One school councillor commented, 'I looked at the playground with all the people playing and it's the happiest it has ever been'.

There are many good things about your school. You are so polite and sensible and you all work and play happily together. You told me that you really appreciate how hard your headteacher, the teachers and support staff work to help you learn. Several of you said that, in the past, you were not interested in work and used to play around in lessons, but now you actually enjoy working hard. The quality of your work is getting better all the time and some of your writing is really powerful. Everybody agrees that behaviour has improved and you told me that you feel very happy in school. You know that you need to take regular exercise to keep fit and you understand what foods make a balanced diet. You are willing workers and want to do your very best.

I think that there are four main areas that still need to be improved. The faster learners in the lower part of the school, Years 1 to 4, could aim even higher with your teachers' help. I also think that you all could try harder to spell accurately. It would be great if you could offer suggestions about how to make your spelling better. I think that there should be opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to use computers more frequently to help them with their learning. Lastly, I think that the equipment in the Reception class needs to be modernised so that the area is more colourful and inviting.

I am sure that there are exciting times ahead and I wish you every success in the future.

John Messer Lead inspector