

The Kingswood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115268
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311895
Inspection date	22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Richard Cheetham

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Savin
Headteacher	Mr David Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Clay Hill Road Basildon Essex SS16 5DE
Telephone number	01268520850
Fax number	01268287602

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues:

- the current standards and progress of Year 3 and Year 6 pupils
- boys' achievement in writing
- strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of the Year 3 curriculum
- the effectiveness of middle leaders and the governing body.

Evidence was gathered from parental questionnaires, interviews with pupils, staff and a long serving governor, school documents and data, and observations of lessons and school activities. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail and the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils who attend this average-sized junior school are from White British backgrounds with a small minority from mainly Black and Asian British families. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. The school serves an urban community of average social and economic circumstances. Nearly all pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school. The Kingswood Junior is a popular school and is oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly below average. Most pupils start school with above expected attainment. The school has an Eco Schools Bronze Award and is an Investor in People.

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 an effective school, which is how it evaluates itself. It is highly regarded by the parents who make comments such as 'The school provides the children with clear expectations and a secure environment to explore.' Several commented favourably on the headteacher's contribution during his career-long period at the school. Children enjoy school and it enables most to reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and to achieve well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective leadership partnership, which has steered the school's good progress since the previous inspection. They have established management systems and high expectations to give the school a good capacity to continue improving.

Pupils make good progress overall and attain highly. In reading, mathematics and science nearly all consistently reach at least the expected level and over half reach higher level. While not attaining quite as highly in writing, nearly all reach the expected level and about a third reach above this. The gap between reading and writing has narrowed further this year. The high levels currently reached and the further improvement in writing are due to routinely good teaching with examples of excellence in Year 6. Continuing improvement in writing remains a school priority. Pupils make a slow start in Year 3 because transition arrangements between the feeder infant school and this school are limited. For instance, Year 3 teachers do not know enough about pupils' previous learning experiences to plan effectively. However, once established in Year 3, progress picks up and continues to be good during their remaining time in school. Pupils who need more help with their learning make at least good progress. This is because they are included very well in lessons, are supported well by learning assistants and have clear targets based on accurate assessments.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with strengths in moral and social development. Pupils are keen to come to school as shown by their good attendance and punctuality and their high rates of participation in extra activities. They particularly enjoy their art and music lessons and are proud to represent their school at community music festivals and sports events. The school has a good record of participation and success. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are considerate, polite and show care for each other.

Pupils are prepared well for the next steps in their education because of their high levels of basic skills, their experiences of decision making through the school and class councils, and their involvement in charity events. Pupils have a good idea about keeping healthy through regular exercise, which includes early morning training and their current participation in the Healthy Schools Initiative. Pupils know to whom to turn if they have personal problems. They know about road safety through their cycling proficiency training. They know how to keep safe on the internet through their information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. They accept responsibility readily and feel they could handle more. For instance, they are keen to be involved in the forthcoming buddying programme, when selected pupils support others during playtimes.

The quality of teaching and learning helps pupils achieve well. Relationships are very good which give pupils confidence to try their best. High expectations are at the heart of most lessons and pupils rise to teachers' challenging questions with increasing assurance. Teachers have good subject knowledge, especially in science and French, so they can extend pupils' thinking

and skills. Lessons have a good blend of activities in tune with pupils' interests and concentration and make good use of simple resources to encourage the development of complex ideas. Teachers of older pupils use suggestions in their marking of pupils' writing to prompt individual progress, but this is not consistent across the school.

The school's curriculum meets the needs of its pupils well. Support for groups of pupils is targeted well and the wide range of visits and visitors enlivens lessons and brings relevance to what pupils learn. The school has improved its provision for ICT so that pupils can practise their skills across the curriculum. A current priority is to increase opportunities for speaking, listening and writing in other subjects. There are many out of school activities that enable pupils to achieve success in different fields such as drama or sport.

The school takes good care of its pupils and has good links with local agencies to extend its care. Good systems for health and safety, safeguarding and supervision underpin pupils' sense of security. Links with other agencies are good. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully and seeks to improve its analysis by introducing a computer-based system. However, its current tracking methods and target setting have helped maintain high standards, improve the progress of low and middle attainers and enabled boys to make better progress in writing.

Middle managers lead subject development well and provide effective support to the leadership team. Their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning through lesson observations and examining pupils' work is thorough but the school does not always use this information systematically enough to bring about further improvement. The headteacher gives a particularly strong lead in setting regularly challenging targets for Year 6 pupils' attainment. These are used exceptionally well to raise standards. Accurate school self-evaluation has led to the right choice of priorities and actions shown in the school's development plan. This is effective because it does not contain too much detail and keeps the school focused on the standards pupils achieve. A separate plan ensures accommodation and resource updating, and middle leaders pursue their costed subject improvement plans. Financial management is very effective. A possible underspend is well targeted and careful budgeting has enabled the school to make incremental improvements over time.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school well. They are fully involved in the process of appointing the headteacher's successor. They are coming to terms with changes in their leadership but are not sufficiently involved in school self-evaluation and development planning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve liaison with the feeder infant school so that Year 3 pupils make better initial progress.
- Ensure that the information from the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning leads to overall improvement.
- Increase governors' involvement in school evaluation and development planning.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	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	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 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?	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	1
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	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

23 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of the Kingswood Junior School, Basildon SS16 2DE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I inspected it recently. I enjoyed my day with you very much. I would particularly like to thank the school council for giving time to tell me what you think about your school. This showed me how proud you are of it and how much you think about your headteacher as he approaches retirement. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

The Kingswood Junior is a good school because it helps you to reach high standards, make good progress and develop well as young people who are polite, considerate and confident. Your behaviour is excellent. All the pupils I met told me how they enjoy school activities such as sport, music and drama. You know how to look after yourself and others and how to lead a healthy life. The school prepares you very well for the next stage in your education because you follow a good curriculum, which gives you a range of opportunities to succeed. Your teachers ask a lot of you, give you help when you need it and you try hard to improve. The adults in school take good care of you and you know that you can trust them. The headteacher and deputy headteacher know what the school needs to do to improve and senior teachers help them to bring this about.

To make your school even better, I have asked it to involve the governors more in understanding the school's performance and helping it improve. Because some of you find it difficult to do your best when you start in Year 3, I have asked your school to work more closely with the infant school. The senior staff are good at finding ways to improve class teaching so I have asked them to make sure all the staff act on their good ideas.

Yours sincerely

Richard Cheetham

Lead inspector