

Kingsholm Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115607
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311997
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Isobel Randall

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Johnathon Hoad
Headteacher	Jan Buckland
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Guinea Street Gloucester GL1 3BN
Telephone number	01452 530777
Fax number	01452 530777

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average size primary school in the centre of Gloucester. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and Travellers is above average. Pupils come mainly from the city of Gloucester but also from a wide surrounding area. They learn in 13 mixed-ability classes with some setting in mathematics. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. An above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Attainment when children enter education is well below what is expected at this age. The school is part of the Gloucester Excellence Cluster. It has taken a lead in the development of the City Curriculum, within the Network Learning Community and Primary Strategy Learning Network. The school has gained the following awards.

ActiveMark and Sportsmark

Basic Skills Quality Mark

Healthy Schools Award

Investor in People

International Schools Award

National Leader in Education

Football Association Charter Mark

Read On Award

Leading Aspect Award

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kingsholm is an outstanding school whose pupils make excellent progress both academically and socially. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has improved steadily since the last inspection. It was significantly above national averages in 2007, with particular strengths in English and science. As attainment on entry to the school has been at least well below expected levels, the picture is of outstanding achievement. The present Year 6 have lower standards than the previous cohort but as pupils started with lower attainment than in the previous year their progress is also outstanding. Provision for Reception is good. As a consequence children make good progress. However, some weaknesses in the outdoor area and difficult access to it restrict the freedom for children to learn through structured play. The school already knows this and improvements are under way.

Care for pupils is excellent, with thorough attention to health and safety. Particularly strong assessment systems identify and make it possible for staff to respond to issues faced by particular pupils or groups. For example, the school has effectively removed weaknesses in some boys' writing identified by teachers in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. A very effective pastoral team provides individual help for the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, along with excellent social care when required. The school celebrates its range of cultures extremely well.

'The school works very hard to develop the whole child', said one parent. This comment is typical of parents who are overwhelmingly supportive. Outstanding teaching responsive to individual needs within an exciting creative curriculum gives pupils keen enthusiasm for school. Excellent behaviour is characterised by consideration for others and responsible attitudes to health and safety. Pupils are confident, thinking learners when asking or answering questions. Teachers develop their independence and creativity throughout all lessons, particularly in the wide range of 'Kingsholm University' choices of activity. Older pupils willingly support younger children. Year 6 are proud of the Kingsholm Leadership Award scheme that teaches them skills such as sports leadership. Members of the pupil parliament have real responsibilities and influence. Almost all pupils attend well; the small minority whose attendance is very low bring the rate down to below average but the school has recently improved attendance from a very low point.

The headteacher's vision for shared leadership has created an outstanding system with excellent collaboration and communication, bringing about improvement in every area of the school's work. Governors make an excellent contribution to the work of the school. The contributions of all concerned mean the school has an outstanding capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is good as a result of outstanding leadership and management. Children's attainment on entry to education is well below what is normally expected, especially in communication, mathematical development and personal and social development. Because provision in Reception is good, children progress well. Despite this, standards are still below what is expected in most areas of learning when children enter Year 1. Children enjoy Foundation Stage activities and make particularly good progress in personal and social development. Their behaviour is outstanding. Children receive high levels of care from the adults around them.

Communication with parents and with the Early Years Centre is good. One parent said, 'I have seen my daughter grow and develop in her sixth months at this school.' Children with learning difficulties and those from Traveller families receive excellent support. Teaching is good overall, but varies from satisfactory to often outstanding. Staff promote good learning by using the good indoor facilities and resources to plan high quality opportunities for a balance of structured play and more formal activities. There are plans to make improvements to outdoor facilities. However, activities are restricted by the quality of outside opportunities and the lack of direct access. These limit the way children can learn through play and staff have to work hard to compensate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance of the small minority of pupils whose parents do not fully appreciate the importance of coming to school regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress from their entry to education to the end of Year 6. Progress is at least good and in some cases outstanding in almost all lessons. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. From below average attainment at the start of Year 1, the present Year 2 have achieved well to be working at expected levels. Over the last five years standards have risen steadily; in Year 6 in 2007 they were significantly above national average, with pupils making excellent progress. The present Year 6 entered the school with particularly low skill and experience levels. Lengthy periods of absence have disrupted the education of Traveller pupils throughout the school, especially in Year 6. Nevertheless because teachers work so effectively, outstanding overall progress has been maintained. Currently Year 6 standards are average but other year groups in Key Stage 2 are on target to improve on 2007 results. With mathematics as the key priority in school forward planning, standards are rising. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of the wide range of interventions used to support specific needs. Outstanding opportunities for independent thinking challenge higher attaining pupils to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are apparent in every part of the school. Excellent spiritual and moral development means that pupils are considerate of the feelings of others. Relationships with adults and their peers are friendly and confident. Pupils organise themselves into productive working groups without fuss. They join with enthusiasm in school activities and play co-operatively at breaks. Interested in other cultures, they enjoy hearing about the lifestyles of their friends. For example, pupils from abroad visiting their countries of origin are proud to present their experiences to the others on their return. Pupils enjoy contact with schools in three continents through reciprocal visits and correspondence. They willingly take responsibility, for example in running the healthy tuckshop, including managing its finances. The elected pupil parliament whose ministers have specific areas of responsibility makes a huge contribution to the direction of the school. All Year 6 pupils learn to lead through the Kingsholm Leadership Award. Pupils know how to stay healthy, eating healthy lunches and drinking water regularly. Participation in sport is high. Such positive attitudes result in outstanding behaviour. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school. Almost

all pupils attend school regularly but the rate is lowered by a very few habitual absentees, holidays in term-time, extended visits to pupils' 'home countries' and movement by Travellers. The school works hard to improve attendance through initiatives such as the walking bus and breakfast club. Most children who are away for long periods continue to learn using email on laptop computers. Outstanding progress in core subjects, coupled with the extent to which pupils learn to make independent choices, provides excellent preparation for future study and life in general.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching has brought about steady improvement in achievement to the present high level. All teachers help and encourage pupils to think independently so that they make informed, confident decisions about their own learning. Lessons are exciting and enjoyable so that pupils are eager to learn more. Pupils feel that reading is fun. Teachers usually take time to explore ideas when pupils' understanding is not wholly secure. Very effective teaching assistants provide well informed and well targeted support. Teachers make learning objectives very clear and use assessments to agree subject-specific targets with pupils. These targets, most of which pupils have suggested themselves, are used very effectively to raise standards with teachers referring to them regularly. Honest, thoughtful peer and self evaluation reinforces the positive impact of this open approach. Marking is encouraging, specific to improvement in subjects and well used by pupils to improve their work. Established classroom procedures help pupils to organise themselves. There is a purposeful atmosphere in which mature attitudes and behaviour lead to excellent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The broad and balanced curriculum is outstanding in its relevance and interest for all pupils. Every child does indeed matter at Kingsholm. The curriculum is well planned to encourage the potential of all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school caters extremely well for pupils whose first language is not English. Travellers' distance learning packs are of good quality and are relevant to the curriculum followed in school. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and very well challenged. Curriculum coverage is broad. All Key Stage 2 pupils learn a modern foreign language. The curriculum has an outstanding impact on pupils' personal as well as academic development. Pupils have excellent opportunities to take responsibility and to think for themselves. Pupils are especially enthusiastic about creative aspects of the excellent City Curriculum such as 'Kingsholm University' whose free choice activities include crafts, dance, playing musical instruments and running a radio station. Enrichment activities have high take-up because of their ambitious range including wide international links. Pupils talked excitedly about their visit to train in a major Spanish football stadium. The school is heavily involved with local organisations such as the Church, the rugby club and nearby museum. Every pupil has opportunities to take part in improving the school and outside community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent personal development and academic achievement are very much due to the outstanding care that the school provides. Rigorous checks on staff, equipment and procedures ensure that the school is a safe place. Parents appreciate the extent to which the school promotes their children's welfare. Pupils new to the school receive a warm and efficient welcome that helps them to settle in quickly. Those who have lengthy absences receive full support to help them continue to learn. Thorough arrangements monitor and discourage absence while rewarding attendance. Attendance has improved but there is still a persistent small minority of parents who fail to send their children to school regularly. Thorough, accurate assessment of each pupil throughout the school means staff are quick to identify characteristics of individual learning. Outstanding individual, class and school target setting is supported strongly by regular adjustments to planning. Pupils know how they can improve. Teachers give them confidence to meet challenging targets. The school invests heavily in excellent booster support for pupils of all abilities. Pastoral care is outstanding. Staff attend very well to pupils' social and academic needs and make very good use of strong links with parents and outside agencies when they are needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership and extremely clear educational direction. Their belief that high achievement should be matched by excellent development of maturity is shared throughout the school. The excellent leadership system promotes effective action to meet challenging targets. Senior leaders' belief that 'Nothing is impossible!' underpins the school's success. Broad distribution of leadership responsibilities is well supported by efficient delegation of management responsibilities amongst staff and governors. Excellent communication keeps all staff informed, and all are able to make their views heard. The impact of leadership on pupils' progress is outstanding because of the success of the key roles taken by all stakeholders. The school refers to 'growing leaders' at all levels. This breadth of expertise enables the school to ensure that pupils achieve equally. Parents are genuinely consulted and given evidence that their views count. The excellent governing body monitors the school thoroughly. Governors' understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is extremely well informed. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate. Given the high quality of teamwork and commitment, and the very effective procedures already in place, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

18 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsholm Primary School, Gloucester, GL1 3BN

Thank you for the very friendly way in which you spoke to us when we visited your school. We were very impressed by the way that you enjoy school and help each other so much.

Kingsholm School is outstanding. That means it is giving you a really good start to your education and is improving every year. We found lots to praise, and very few things that need to be improved.

Here are some of the things that we really liked.

- You are all learning very well so that your progress is better than in most schools.
- You told us how much you enjoy learning in class, and we could see for ourselves that you do.
- You want to improve your work, and staff are very good at showing you how to do this.
- Your teachers work out where you need extra help or could do better and plan lessons to make this happen.
- There are many ways in which you take responsibility for helping others or giving your ideas for improving the school.
- You enjoy finding out about the lives of people from other cultures.
- The headteacher's leadership is excellent She listens to everybody's views and makes sure the school continues to move forward.

In order to be even better the school should:

- make sure that all parents know how important it is for their children to come to school regularly.

You can help by continuing to work hard!

Yours sincerely

Isobel Randall Lead inspector

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Lead inspector