

Kanes Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116131
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	312186
Inspection date	24 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	263
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Berry
Headteacher	Ms Sallyanne Stanton / Miss Alison Maybury
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fairfax Court Hinkler Road Thornhill Southampton SO19 6FW
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- What is the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1?
- How well are pupils achieving in writing?
- What are the key features of the quality of leadership and management?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kanes Hill is larger than most primary schools. The EYFS currently consists of three classes that contain both Reception and Year 1 pupils. In addition, there are three classes that have Year 2 and Year 3 pupils and a further four classes of mixed-age pupils in Years 4 to 6. There is a breakfast club that is managed by the governors. In addition, there is a pre-school, an after school club and holiday club, none of which are managed by the governors. The leadership of the school is shared between the substantive headteacher, who is currently seconded to support the local authority for part of each week, and a co-headteacher. The acting co-headteacher works alongside the substantive headteacher and is in school on a full-time basis.

Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few pupils from a number of other ethnic backgrounds, but those at an early stage of learning English are thinly represented. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Most of these pupils have either moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in People, Enhanced Healthy Schools, Sports Activemark and Artsmark Silver.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kanes Hill is an outstanding school that has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection. It is a place where there is excellence around every corner and in which pupils thrive outstandingly well in both their academic and personal development. There is an exceptionally high commitment to learning and improvement, and opportunities for further training and development for all the adults are grasped and taken. It is a true learning community. For example, because the school is an accredited test centre, almost all the support staff have gained national vocational qualifications and three teaching assistants have been awarded a Foundation Degree, with a further two currently working towards this. All staff, including non-teaching staff, take part in the decision-making processes and are expected to seek further improvements and suggest changes and developments in the school's provision. This results in close teamwork and high staff morale. In consequence, there is a very strong unity of purpose, which is evident in the effective and consistent school-wide practices and which secures exemplary learning for pupils.

The pupils are immensely proud of their school. They love attending and look forward excitedly to their lessons and learning. The staff recognise the individual strengths of each pupil and they foster and nurture their development, consistently building on their interests and expanding their horizons. Provision to support pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties is excellent and very much focused on the younger year groups. By the time that they leave the school, pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Older pupils are reflective and mature young people who have a keen sense of citizenship and a highly developed understanding of issues of environmental sustainability. Behaviour is exemplary, relationships throughout the school are outstanding and attitudes are highly positive. Even though the attendance of most families is good, despite the very best efforts of the school, attendance remains below average. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared to move to secondary education.

Almost all the parents are effusive in their support of the school. They justifiably comment that the school provides a very safe and vibrant learning environment for their children and they are almost unanimous in their support of all aspects of school life. These views are summed up by the parent who said, 'Kanes Hill never stops surprising me. It is well organised, friendly and thoroughly professional. It is a superb school.' Another said, 'Why wasn't my school like this? My son can't wait to come home and tell us everything about his day!'

Children enter the school with skills that are very low in comparison with those expected. Throughout the school all groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well. Progress is excellent in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, standards in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 are below average, though improving. Excellent progress in Key Stage 2 results in pupils attaining standards that are at least at the national average, and are consistently above average in science. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. This marks exceptionally strong achievement from low starting points. Pupils want to talk about school and learning, and are very keen to explain how well they are doing and exactly what they have to do to meet the next step in their learning. They are particularly proud of being members of the Kanes Hill University; each Friday morning the school is transformed into a university in which pupils attend half-termly courses as students. They have tutors rather than teachers and they relish

the chance to gain certificates of competence in their chosen areas. These are added to their record of achievement.

The curriculum is excellent and provides a wealth of activities for pupils, including an exceptionally strong range of after school activities supporting the rich and stimulating in-school activities. The arts, particularly music and drama, are exceptionally strong with a large majority of pupils learning an orchestral instrument. The exceptionally well-developed curriculum is made real for pupils because activities are given purpose and personalised for them. In addition, the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are systematically woven into the themes being studied. A good example of this is in the recent upper school topic about the Titanic. For this, pupils wrote letters and leaflets, newspaper reports and biographies. They learned about the difference between life in steerage and first class and used inference and deduction to draw their own conclusions about life on board the ship. In addition, they learned about Southampton as a major port, visited Mayflower Park, took a boat trip on Southampton Water and sketched scenes which were then used to make high-quality 3D models of the Titanic. The topic culminated in a black-tie tea dance with the pupils dancing the waltz and polka!

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent in almost all classrooms, with all staff having exceptionally high expectations of what can be achieved. There is a careful and methodical checking of progress in highly developed plenary sessions at the end of each lesson, in which pupils assess their own skills and development against the success criteria that teachers have set. Older pupils even prepare success criteria for units of work for themselves and they help each other to determine what they need to do to reach them. All classrooms are a buzz of quiet industry, characterised by excellent behaviour management by staff, outstanding support given by teaching assistants and high levels of concentration. Specialist subject teachers support learning. A number of teachers, including advanced skills teachers from the partner secondary school, support learning in design technology, art, science, dance and Spanish.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership of the joint headteachers exudes excellence. There is a powerful vision and determination for the continuing improvement of the school that is underpinned by rigorous self-evaluation to which all staff contribute effectively. This results in an organisation that is forward-looking, incisive and learning-centred. Teachers have a clear and close understanding of the provision and standards in their areas of responsibility, and they help and support each other, to ensure that the results of their evaluations lead to refinements in teaching and learning to further boost achievements. One example of this is the excellent improvement programme that has resulted in improvements in standards in writing. Detailed analyses of achievements resulted in even closer attention being paid to the teaching of letters and sounds and additional support being given to pupils who find learning hard. In addition, extra opportunities for extended writing were provided. In consequence, the gap between standards in reading and writing in both Year 2 and Year 6 is closing and achievement has been boosted. The school is aware that there is a continuing need to emphasise pupils' speaking and listening skills in order to further raise achievement in writing. Governors play an important part in both supporting and challenging the school to do even better. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and its future direction. The outstanding nature of the school's provision and its achievement provides a clear demonstration for its outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

'My child is not feeling too good today but still wanted to come to school. He wouldn't miss it for the world.' This comment from one parent sums up the excellent start children receive in the Reception classes. They enter school with knowledge and skills that are poor in comparison with those expected of their age, particularly in their communication skills. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills, although staff recognise that there is a need to continue to emphasise these skills. However, because the quality of the provision is outstanding, children make excellent progress. Their progress in language and literacy and social development is particularly rapid. Staff use specific programmes well, such as the sounds and letters and the 'manage our own time', to extend children's reading, writing and communication skills. For example, boys who are hesitant writers are beginning to develop an interest in mark-making, whether it is writing their own recipe for the cake or making a 'book' about their observations.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the EYFS because adults use their expert knowledge about how young children learn to plan activities that stimulate their curiosity as well as extend their knowledge and skills in a fun way. For example, children were excited to find out how the cornflakes cake would turn out, using the recipe from their story book, and they made a list of special ingredients they might use in their own cake. Despite this excellent progress, only a small minority of children reach the expected learning goals and few exceed them.

Children's personal, development and well-being are excellent. The 'all about me' bag and the 'quiet time' enhance the opportunities they have to share their concerns and their news, as well as provide opportunities to reflect on their own feelings. Staff make excellent use of both indoor and outdoor facilities to enable children to link their learning and make sense of the world around them. Observations and assessments are used effectively to identify areas for focused support. One of the strengths in EYFS is the way staff work together as a team to make learning fun and relevant for all children. The EYFS leader sets an excellent example to others through her own practice, and her leadership and management are excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to strengthen speaking and listening skills in order to further accelerate progress in literacy.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

05 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kanes Hill Primary School, Southampton, SO19 6FW

Thank you so much for making us welcome and for talking with me when we visited your school. We enjoyed finding out about Kanes Hill. I particularly enjoyed hearing about Kanes Hill University and how well you are doing on your Friday courses. I also enjoyed looking at your work and models of the Titanic in the upper school.

We agree with you and your parents that yours is an excellent school in all respects. Your achievement throughout the school is outstanding. We were very impressed with the way that you use so many skills across all your subjects. We enjoyed looking at the many displays of work that helped to show the wide variety of things that you are taught. Your teachers have excellent skills and they help you to learn exceptionally well. They plan interesting and exciting activities for you, and we can understand why you all love lessons and learning.

Your behaviour is excellent, you have very positive attitudes towards each other and we were very impressed with how well all of you get on together. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Your headteachers and all the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do an excellent job. They make sure that you receive the best possible education.

We have asked your school to do one thing. This is to continue to ensure that there are lots of opportunities provided for you to talk and listen, to further improve your standards in reading and writing.

Once again, thank you for your help. We know that the staff will help you to keep doing your best.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector