

Kimpton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117118
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312497
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lesley Glass
Headteacher	Mrs Diana F Diggines
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2003
School address	High Street Kimpton Hertfordshire SG4 8RB
Telephone number	01438832394
Fax number	01438833693

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size school serving Kimpton and surrounding villages. The number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is well below average. A below average number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The numbers of pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability, or who have a statement of special educational need is below average.

The school has a Healthy Schools Award, School Achievement Awards, a Basic Skills Quality Mark, a Quality Mark for the Nursery, a Quality Mark for Breakfast Club and an Investor in People Award.

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 a good school with important outstanding features and some areas for further improvement. It provides good value for money. The determination and commitment of the highly effective headteacher is one of the main reasons why the school is so successful. She is supported well by governors and a hardworking and cohesive team who all believe that children cannot learn effectively without strong foundations to support their personal, social and emotional needs.

Excellent pastoral care and support are provided for each pupil. Adults provide a warm and nurturing family atmosphere and everyone goes the extra mile to help pupils achieve. Consequently, pupils feel valued, secure and learn well. It is no surprise that pupils' personal development is outstanding by the time they leave the school. Their behaviour is excellent. They develop an outstanding sense of responsibility through the many roles they are proud to take on, and develop confidence beyond their years. Pupils are keen to help others in their community and beyond. An emphasis on healthy eating and physical activity has helped them to develop an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They also understand very well how to stay safe.

Good teaching, based on extremely positive relationships and a good and very well enriched curriculum help to ensure that pupils are highly interested and well motivated to work hard. One pupil said enthusiastically, 'What I particularly like is what the school offers you - the lessons and the clubs'.

Right from the start, pupils settle quickly and happily into the Nursery class and go on to make good progress overall during their time at the school. The standards pupils reach and the rate at which they progress occasionally varies across year groups and subjects. Senior leaders have recognised this and recently put procedures that are even more rigorous in place to check on how well all pupils are doing. However, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school, which is an excellent preparation for their future lives. Highly skilled teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure those who need extra help also do well. Academic guidance is good, although some pupils are not always clear about the next steps for their learning or what they need to do to improve their work.

Good leadership and management have been central to the school's success. The headteacher has made a strong contribution. She, for example, promotes the excellent personal development of pupils and channels the different skills of able staff in the most effective way to drive school improvement forward. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. They include improved resources for information and communication technology (ICT) and improvements to the school environment, which further stimulate the pupils' desire to learn.

The school is a valued centre for the community and quite rightly is highly praised by parents and community partners alike. Typically, one parent volunteered, 'The school is caring and balanced, committed to excellent education and responds to the needs of different children well'. Another perceptively wrote that, 'There is a wonderful sense of belonging in the school. The children look out for each other, whatever their age'. The success the school has had in the past, coupled with a determination to do even better, demonstrates that there is good potential to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the Foundation Stage. They get off to a flying start in the Nursery. This is because of the excellent support and knowledge of staff, who make children feel highly valued, confident and ready to learn. An exciting curriculum is provided which motivates the children and promotes their independence well. They have so much fun that they do not realise how hard they are working. Individualised learning programmes for children are based on careful assessments. This is an important feature of the good and often outstanding teaching. Teaching assistants also provide strong support for children's learning. A seamless transition into the Reception class is carefully managed so that children continue to thrive. Consequently, by the time children enter Year 1, they achieve the goals expected of them and many surpass them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all pupils make consistently good or better progress.
- Ensure pupils are always clear about the next steps of their learning and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well whilst at the school, though their rate of progress varies occasionally within and across year groups. Overall, children begin Nursery with higher levels of knowledge and skills than are typical of children nationally. Their skills in communication, language and literacy and in creative development are typical of children nationally. They achieve and most exceed the standards expected of them by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. Standards at the end of Year 2 fluctuate year on year but pupils are currently on target to exceed the standards expected for their age. They reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 6, reflecting the increasingly challenging targets that pupils are set. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They reflect carefully and talk with remarkable confidence about their understanding of the world and their rights and responsibilities. They successfully take responsibility for their own work and challenge themselves to think and work hard. They are extremely thoughtful and considerate in their behaviour towards each other and in their willingness to contribute to improving the lives of others. They enjoy school greatly and this is reflected in above average attendance. Pupils are extremely keen to make healthy and safe lifestyle choices, for example, by taking part in an extensive range of sporting activities. Their outstanding personal development, along with high academic standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT, prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their education and life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers promote extremely positive relationships and attitudes to learning. This results in excellent behaviour, pupils who enjoy and take responsibility for their own learning and who work hard. Much good and some outstanding teaching was seen at the time of the inspection. The best lessons feature practical and creative activities which engage pupils and give them opportunities to solve problems and to practise what they have learned. In these lessons pupils are very clear about what they are expected to learn and they are skilled in evaluating their own success. As a consequence they make good or better progress. However, occasionally these principles are not consistently applied and as a result pupils' progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils get broad experiences with an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills. ICT is used to support study themes that bring together other subjects in a way that interests and engages pupils well. Opportunities are occasionally lost for parents to be well informed and involved with the curriculum. This restricts their chances to work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning further.

An effective programme of personal, social and health education and regular assembly themes contributes well to pupils' excellent personal development. Curricular enrichment is outstanding. The school organises a very wide range of visits and visitors, using local opportunities when possible, and provides extensive club activities which are very well attended. These not only support pupils' learning but also help to foster their extremely positive attitudes. Everyone is included successfully, helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to do well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Though provision is good overall, the pastoral care and support of pupils is outstanding and results in pupils' excellent personal development. All adults are excellent role models and have a genuine concern for pupils' health, safety and well-being. Rigorous child protection arrangements and risk assessments are in place. Able teaching assistants support individuals and groups of pupils successfully.

Academic guidance is good. Innovative ways are used to develop pupils' ability to 'learn how to learn'. In some classes, pupils make choices in their work, take responsibility for their learning and evaluate how well they are doing. Older pupils even visit other schools to help them assess how well their pupils are doing this. These relatively new practices are not fully embedded in all classes or achieving their full impact. Procedures for ensuring that pupils understand how to improve in specific aspects of their work are not consistently applied across the school. Consequently, some pupils are not clear about the next steps of their learning or how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been highly effective in maintaining a positive ethos and strategic direction for the school. She leads a hardworking team united behind a shared vision. At its heart there is a commitment to include everyone and ensure that they develop into truly well rounded individuals. Effective systems for self-evaluation ensure that senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Everyone plays their part in driving forward school improvement and maintaining high standards. There is no complacency and leaders are particularly successful in seeking additional partnerships and funding opportunities which enhance pupils' experiences. Governors are highly supportive and provide a good degree of challenge. Some curriculum leaders and governors are new and it is too early for them to have had a measurable impact.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	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?	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	2
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?	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	2
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	2
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

29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kimpton Primary School, Kimpton, Hertfordshire, SG4 8RB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we thought about your school and how it could be even better.

We think you are lucky to go to such a good school. You told us that teachers make learning interesting and fun and that you do exciting things in and out of lessons. We saw some of this ourselves when looking around the school. You also told us that behaviour is excellent and that everyone gets on together very well. This was certainly the impression we had as we saw you working hard in classes, having lunch together quietly and sensibly and playing outside. You also have adults to go to if you ever get worried and upset. You make good progress in your learning because teaching is mostly good and sometimes outstanding, and the staff look after you so well. In some classes you make even quicker progress but occasionally your progress slows.

To make the school even better we have asked that teachers and those who lead the school make sure that you always make at least good or better progress. Also, we have asked that teachers always make your next steps of learning very clear and that you always understand what you have to do to achieve them.

I am sure your headteacher and the staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you. You can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector