

Kings Langley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117283
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312555
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Peevers
Headteacher	Mr Ian Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Common Lane King's Langley Hertfordshire WD4 8DQ
Telephone number	01923263321
Fax number	01923270809

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportions of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities, speaking English as an additional language and coming from minority ethnic groups are below the national averages. The school holds the Investors in People, the Healthy School and the Active Sports Mark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This welcoming and inclusive school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Inspectors understand why so many parents referred to a 'warm, caring environment' and 'strong pastoral care', as these contribute much to pupils' good personal development.

Pupils enjoy their education and their attendance is above average. The vast majority behave well, grow in confidence and feel safe in school. This is because all staff place significant emphasis on the safety and well-being of pupils. Relationships are good. Pupils appreciate the broad and interesting curriculum and are keen to take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities, which contribute effectively to their learning and their good understanding of healthy living.

Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations in English, mathematics and science. Scrutiny of pupils' work and assessment information suggests they are well placed to achieve above average standards by the end of the year and reach the challenging targets set by the school. This is because teaching is consistent in these year groups and teachers are determined that pupils will attain high standards. Writing is a strength throughout the school but standards in mathematics and science are more variable. The school has recognised that raising standards in English, mathematics and science is a priority and that ensuring consistency of progress is a key area for development.

Currently, teaching varies from outstanding to satisfactory. As a result, the progress pupils make is uneven but overall, their achievement and the quality of teaching are satisfactory. The school is working successfully with the local authority to improve consistency in provision. Recent changes in the responsibilities of subject leaders, the greater emphasis placed on the teaching of mathematics, combined with improved assessment procedures and the setting of clear pupil learning targets are leading to improvements in standards. However, the use of assessment to consolidate and extend pupils' learning is inconsistent. Pupils are not always clear about what they have to do next to improve their work. Consequently, although the pastoral care is good, overall care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and all health and safety requirements are met.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Leaders and managers have correctly identified the areas for development. The interim school development plan is good and focuses on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. Appropriate strategies are in place to bring about improvements. These include redefining the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders and setting of challenging targets. Subject leaders are satisfactorily beginning to undertake responsibilities for their subjects but this initiative is still in the early stages of development. Governors are supportive of the school but do not hold the school to account sufficiently for the standards it is achieving. Nevertheless, the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Teachers use information technology with increasing confidence to promote pupils' learning. Provision to promote pupils' personal development has improved significantly. The recent improvements demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve and provides sound value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly in line with expectations. Children make good progress and achieve well. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they are achieving standards above those expected for their age. The environment in the Foundation classes is exciting. The children enjoy a range of interesting activities in each of the six areas of learning. Teaching is enthusiastic, stimulating and consistent in all classes. Assessment and planning are strong and the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the children. Specific activities are planned to develop the children's, but especially the boys', interest and enthusiasm for writing. This is resulting in above average standards. High expectations of the staff and good relationships with the children mean that there is a calm and harmonious atmosphere in which to play, work and learn. Support staff are used effectively to help the children learn. There are well-developed links with parents. The strong emphasis placed on developing children's personal and social skills means that the children behave well and quickly become independent learners. The outdoor area, although small, has a good range of resources and equipment, which interest the children and promotes their learning. Effective management of the timetable ensures that all children from Nursery and Reception have access to it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons come up to that of the best so that pupils make good progress and attain higher standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Firmly embed assessment procedures and use outcomes effectively to inform planning.
- Ensure governors and subject leaders improve their skills in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school so that they are better able to judge its performance and take any necessary corrective actions.

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

In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the Year 6 national tests, overall standards were similar to those found nationally. However, there were variations between subjects. Standards in English were above average, in mathematics and science they were broadly average. Standards in science were much lower than the previous year and below those in mathematics. Pupils made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 but their progress in Key Stage 2 was less consistent. This is because of the variability in the quality of teaching. Overall, their achievement was broadly satisfactory. Over the last three years, standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics have remained reasonably constant. In science, they have varied significantly. In Year 2, there is an improving trend. The recent introduction of more rigorous assessment procedures and monitoring of teaching is leading to greater consistency in teaching and the progress made by the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties receive appropriate support, enabling them to make satisfactory progress and reach reasonable standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. This is reflected in their enjoyment of school, their positive attitudes and their good attendance. In discussion, they could think of very little they would change. Behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils are lively, confident, friendly and helpful. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their ideas, actions and consequences, as well as taking responsibilities such as in the school council, peer mediation and office duties. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe, they are developing a good understanding of other cultures and enjoy the links with schools in other countries. Pupils' sound levels of basic skills and their good personal development prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All teachers have good relationships with their pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan interesting and varied activities that match pupils' abilities. This ensures that pupils enjoy their lessons, take pride in their work and make good progress. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. In some lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress because the lessons lack pace and focus. In most lessons, teachers are increasing their use of the electronic white boards with confidence, to add interest to their lessons. They set clear learning objectives, but these are not sufficiently reinforced in most lessons. Some teachers do not consistently use their knowledge of pupils' performance to plan subsequent lessons or provide opportunities for pupils to self-assess their learning. The variability in the quality of teaching results in pupils' making uneven progress as they move through the school. However, recent changes, which include the better use of assessment to plan lessons, the tracking of pupils' performance to identify pupils who are falling behind and the setting of clear targets is leading to greater consistency in pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and contributes much to the pupils' personal and social development. Good opportunities for older pupils to learn French and Spanish and provision in art and music contribute effectively to their cultural development. Careful thought has been given to the identification of topics to ensure that good links are made between subjects. This approach is adding stimulus and meaning to learning and encouraging pupils to become independent learners. While the school has worked hard to make the curriculum interesting, the earlier lack of focus on English, mathematics and science means that pupils have not always made the expected progress and attained high enough standards in these subjects. This is being addressed. The school has improved provision with some new computers and interactive white boards in each classroom. However, the lack of a sufficient number of computers means that opportunities for whole class teaching of information technology skills are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they know where to turn if they need help. Clear behaviour procedures give pupils security and create a good working atmosphere in which they can learn confidently. Satisfactory procedures are in place to identify pupils at risk and to offer effective support. Links with agencies to support pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties and disabilities are effective and help ensure these pupils make satisfactory progress. However, the academic guidance for all pupils is not as strong. There are some good examples of marking, particularly in English, and pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do next, but much of the marking does not give pupils enough guidance for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together effectively to promote the welcoming and friendly ethos of the school. The school operates well on a day-to-day basis. It is calm and well ordered. The headteacher provides sound leadership and has a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development. As a result, the senior management team have recently taken a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This has resulted in redefining the role and responsibilities of subject leaders to include whole school monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning. Although developments are still at an early stage, subject leaders now have a better understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Pupils' progress is monitored more carefully and there are improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, standards are rising. Governors are supportive of the school and are effective in promoting links with the community. However, they have not challenged the leadership team sufficiently on the standards achieved by the pupils because they do not receive adequate briefing and are not sufficiently familiar with the national test results.

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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?	2
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	2
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?	3

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

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kings Langley Primary School, Common Lane, Kings Langley WD4 8DQ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and to see your attendance is above average. You behave well and are keen to take on responsibilities. You have a good understanding of healthy living and know about keeping safe. It was nice to see that you have developed good links with schools in other countries. This is helping you learn about other cultures, beliefs and ways of life. We found that your personal development is good.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Nursery and in the Reception classes. The standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are similar to those reached in most schools. However, in English, particularly in writing, they are above average. Overall, the progress you make is satisfactory. Several of you told us that you enjoyed your work because the teachers organise the curriculum to make it interesting. We thought the Year 6 work on the Victorians was good. You also told us how much you enjoyed the after-school clubs and activities. You are lucky to have so many from which to choose.

The adults look after you well and they make certain you are safe. Some of your lessons are very interesting but you need more work that really challenges and excites you. More guidance on how to improve your work would help you to make better progress. To help you achieve higher standards, we have asked your teachers to make certain that all lessons are interesting and that assessments of your work are used to plan future lessons more effectively.

For this to happen, subject leaders and governors need to look carefully at the progress you are making and the standards you are achieving. They have just started to do this, so we have asked them to continue, as we are certain this will help you reach those higher standards.

Once again, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable.

Best wishes

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector