

Kingshill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117319
Local Authority	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
Inspection number	312567
Inspection date	21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kate Belinis
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Reemer
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Heath Drive Ware Hertfordshire SG12 0RL
Telephone number	01920 465349
Fax number	01920 465657

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who was in the school for one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following areas were inspected in detail: the progress pupils make at each stage of the school; aspects of the curriculum to support the school's outstanding judgement of its quality; and the effectiveness of systems for providing academic guidance to pupils. Teaching and learning, pupils' personal development, leadership, and management were also inspected. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils' work, discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and pupils, the parental questionnaires and school self-evaluation documents.

Description of the school

This larger than average infant school is very popular and is often oversubscribed. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that nationally expected for their age in aspects of personal and language development. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is below average. The number of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or with a statement of special educational need is below average. Very few pupils come from backgrounds other than White British and all use English as their first language. Awards achieved by the school include Hertfordshire Quality Standard and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils make excellent progress in this highly effective school. One of the main reasons for its success is the outstanding quality of learning opportunities. The school has adopted the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), which has been adapted and supplemented to meet the needs of these pupils extremely well. The curriculum has a significant impact on the quality of the school's provision and outcomes. It supports pupils' excellent achievement and the high standards they attain, and has a significant impact on their outstanding personal development and attitudes to school. The IPC makes a major contribution to the excellent quality of education provided. Parents have very positive views about the school and think highly of what it does for their children.

Achievement is excellent through both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the time pupils leave Reception, many are working confidently within the Key Stage 1 programmes. Standards have been above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has recently taken effective action to raise standards even further. The current Year 2 pupils have been the first ones to benefit from a number of initiatives including changes in the school's approach to teaching writing and improved ways of developing early language skills in the Foundation Stage. Pupils are grouped by ability for mathematics in Year 2 and computer based support programs are used for those who find mathematics more difficult. Consequently, standards this year have risen and the work of the current Year 2 is well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. From their low starting points, pupils therefore progress extremely well, particularly those who find learning more difficult.

Pupils enjoy school very much and many of them say they are very pleased with the chances they get to learn interesting things. The curriculum contributes significantly to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about life in their own town in local studies and appreciate life in other countries through topics such as 'Travelling the World'. They find the work so interesting because teachers encourage and guide them to form their own lines of enquiry, which they follow with great enthusiasm. This helps them appreciate global issues, such as the threat to rainforests, to a degree that is extraordinary for pupils of this age. Parents have noticed a change in their children's attitudes to school and, in a recent survey, say their children are now talking a great deal about what they have done in school. Improved attendance, which is now above average, reflects their enjoyment of school.

Through topics such as 'Healthy Living', pupils gain an excellent level of understanding of how to eat healthily. Through a very good range of extra-curricular provision, including clubs based on physical activity, they know how to stay physically fit. The school has excellent partnerships that promote pupils' well-being extremely well and add high levels of interest and enjoyment to learning. In personal, social and health education and citizenship pupils learn the importance of caring for each other and they say that they feel the school is a very safe place to be. This reflects the excellent pastoral care shown for all. Pupils have a strong moral code and express disapproval of some pupils' 'wrong behaviour'. If ever other pupils' actions upset them, they all know of someone to go to for help and older pupils are often mature enough to try to resolve problems for themselves.

The level of continuity between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is planned extremely well so that pupils move on to the next levels when they are ready. The school makes sure that, as well as providing an interesting and very broad range of learning opportunities, there is a

strong focus on developing core skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils at all levels of attainment and provide activities that are well matched to their capabilities, challenge them and move them on at a brisk pace. Pupils respond really well to this and become very competent learners. In one mathematics lesson on measuring capacity, pupils moved on to the next steps of estimating quite spontaneously. Teachers adopt a wide range of learning styles, which suit pupils' preferences well. They enjoy the way that learning is personalised, for example, where they have the opportunity to follow their own lines of enquiry. Consequently, they make excellent progress and reach high standards for their age in subjects such as science, art, history and geography as well as English and mathematics.

Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils' achievement is tracked very closely. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to support pupils who find learning more difficult or those identified as not making enough progress. Pupils know what is expected of them and how well they are doing, and their targets are clear in their minds. They are also involved from a very early age in assessing their own progress in lessons. Pupils use criteria for measuring their success, which they clearly understand and use effectively.

Leadership and management are excellent and the school is extremely well placed to improve further. It is one that does not stand still and constantly evaluates its performance and identifies areas for improvement, although, it is modest in its assessment of its own effectiveness. The headteacher, senior leadership team and the governors work very closely to ensure there is a clear and shared vision for the future of the school. They are developing the roles of those subject leaders who are new to their responsibilities. They all keep a very careful watch on any changes or developments. Targets set for pupils, and for staff through the management of their performance, are very challenging and have helped raise standards. The school has a very good grasp of pupils' individual performance but its use of whole school data is not quite as sophisticated. The school has begun to refine its use of assessment data to identify whole-school issues, for example the performance of different groups of pupils; or where weaknesses lie in different subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is extremely effective and enables children to achieve exceptionally well. There is a strong focus on developing communication skills and helping children to become more independent, both of which are areas of weakness when children enter the Nursery. Children experience a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those chosen by children themselves. Both are planned carefully to encourage them to interact with each other and with adults. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to provide interesting activities, which children enjoy. A careful watch is kept on children's learning so that adults have a clear idea of how well they are doing and what their particular needs are. Adults ensure that each child experiences a balanced range of learning opportunities. Classroom and work areas are well resourced and planned effectively to provide good opportunities to learn through play, both in and out of doors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the analysis of assessment data to identify areas for whole school improvement, and particularly to raise standards in mathematics.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingshill Infants School, Ware, SG12 0RL

I really enjoyed the short time I spent in your school and I was very impressed by what I saw. I enjoyed visiting your classes, meeting you and your teachers and most of all, the chances I had to talk to you about you and your school. I found out that you go to an excellent school. All the adults working with you work very hard to provide you with a high quality education, which helps you have very high levels of interest and enjoyment in learning. You play your part really well by behaving to a very high standard, taking school seriously and trying really hard to do your best. I was very impressed that such young children are as sensible as you are in the way in which you go about learning, being friends with and caring about others and at the way in which you meet the high levels adults expect of you. The result is that you all make excellent progress both in your lessons and in becoming sensible young people, ready to go on to the next school and into the future. Those of you I spoke to enjoy school very much and it is clear that you all get on well together and look after each other.

There is very little that needs improving that your teachers have not already recognised and done something about. I am asking the staff and governors:

- to look carefully at your results to identify what needs to be improved so that the school will go from strength to strength, especially in maths.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector