

Keinton Mandeville Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123650
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314657
Inspection date	20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maxine Shawcross
Headteacher	Ceri Austin
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Chistles Lane Keinton Mandeville Somerton TA11 6ES
Telephone number	01458 223452
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village school admitting pupils mostly from the immediate rural area. There are significantly more boys than girls, particularly in the Reception/Year 1 class. There are very few pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. Numbers of pupils entering the school are falling steadily.

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, highly regarded by pupils and parents. An important reason for the school's success lies in the good leadership and management, not least by the headteacher, who has high expectations of pupils, staff and herself. She provides clear direction with a determined focus on pupils working hard to meet challenging targets. Other leaders provide good support to the headteacher and together they form a strong team with a shared vision. Governors play an important role through their energetic support and challenge to the school. A strength of the leadership lies in the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and regular evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning. These enable the school to evaluate its effectiveness effectively and improve the provision to rectify any weaknesses. The school therefore has good capacity to improve further.

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and that the best thing about it is the teachers. Teachers work hard at making lessons fun and pupils learn almost without realising they have been working. They plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils of different ages or abilities have work at the right level. They expect pupils to behave impeccably, so they do. This starts in the Reception class and is consistent throughout the school. It means that pupils cover a great deal of work in lessons and explains why standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. This represents good progress, overall, but the school is rightly working at improving the achievement of boys in writing because too few of them attain the high standards of which some are capable.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection, but still lag behind those of other subjects. This is because the pupils have some, but as yet not have enough opportunities to develop their computer skills in different subjects. Otherwise, the curriculum is well planned and provides a rich variety of activities, both in academic subjects and the arts. It also gives pupils excellent guidance on how to live healthy lives and they say how much they enjoy the nutritious food at lunchtime. They think deeply about how their actions affect others in the community and develop a real sense of right and wrong. The many opportunities provided for pupils to learn about the world around them help them develop a good awareness of the richness of different cultures. The extensive range of clubs at lunchtime and after-school activities is very popular with pupils and does much to extend their learning in areas such as music and sports. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and they do this readily.

Pupils feel safe because bullying is rare and staff take excellent care of them. Health and safety and child protection systems are robust and monitored closely by the staff and governing body. All adults ensure that pupils get whatever guidance and support they need. Parents value this aspect of the school very highly and are quick to say how much it benefits their children. Typical of parents' comments are, 'The school exudes warmth and energy', 'All I see is smiling faces' and 'There is always a buzz of enthusiasm.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the Reception classes is good. The detailed assessments provide accurate measures of children's progress and teachers use them effectively to plan activities at the right level. Teachers and teaching assistants make learning enjoyable and children love coming to

school. The teaching is consistently good and children make good progress in all areas of their development. The curriculum is planned very carefully to ensure children have the right balance of academic work to improve their reading, writing and number skills and time to develop their independence and social skills through play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of more able boys in writing.
- Include yet more opportunities for pupils to use ICT in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average, overall, and pupils achieve well. They enter the school with skills that are typical for their age and make good progress throughout. Children in Reception make a good start to school and make rapid progress. Their attainment in all areas is above average by the end of the Reception Year.

This good progress is maintained in the infant classes, and standards by Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to do well and standards by Year 6 are significantly above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The trend is steadily upwards in all three subjects, with the only weakness being the low proportion of boys who attain the higher levels in writing. While boys write extensive and often interesting pieces of work, they often forget to use punctuation or paragraphs and this lowers their standards. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is average. Although they do have opportunities to make use of ICT, pupils have had too few opportunities to develop their skills to the full in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, and benefit from good support in class from skilled teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and attend regularly. They like being part of a small school because, as one pupil put it, 'We know everybody and we look after each other.' They have an excellent awareness of how to live healthy lives and speak animatedly about how the new lunches are healthy and 'extremely tasty'. Pupils think deeply about issues such as poverty and raise substantial funds for local and national charities. They have an exceptional sense of right and wrong that is enhanced by them helping to establish class and school rules. As a result, behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are well prepared for the future by developing an understanding of teamwork on residential trips, taking responsibility in after-school clubs and developing good literacy and numeracy skills. They make good contributions to the community through activities such as working on the school council and forging close links with residents of their village.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers work hard at making learning fun, which is why so many pupils say that the best thing about school is the lessons. They like the way that teachers encourage them to explore topics

in depth, such as when they watched an excerpt from *The Lion King* and had to write a vivid description of the setting. They learn quickly because teachers are good at explaining new work and then providing tasks for them to work at their own level. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and as a result they behave impeccably and try hard to do their best. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not always high enough, and careless and poorly punctuated work, particularly by boys, is not always sufficiently picked up on in marking. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn quickly because teachers ensure they take a full part in lessons while providing valuable individual or small group work to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers' regular assessments of pupils' work are thorough and provide them with a clear picture of their levels of attainment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a well organised curriculum that makes learning interesting and relevant to all groups of pupils. Good planning for literacy and numeracy provides many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to hone their reading and number skills. Other subjects are linked well together to make topics meaningful to pupils. A relative weakness in the curriculum, however, is in the use of ICT in subjects, which varies widely from class to class depending on the extent of teachers' expertise. The curriculum is effective in meeting the needs of the different ages in classes, including Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils, so that work is not unnecessarily repeated.

The school enriches the curriculum with a good range of activities at lunchtime and after school, including the very popular sports clubs. The school makes good use of visits, visitors and links with other schools to enhance the curriculum and bring it to life. Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent, and gives pupils valuable opportunities to discuss their worries and learn how to stay healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A strength of the school lies in the high quality of the care, guidance and support offered to pupils that makes them feel safe and valued. Parents speak highly of the 'family atmosphere' that makes the most of being a small school. Staff are very thorough in their recording of pupils' progress and use the resulting data very well to support them in their personal development and academic progress. This is why pupils enjoy school and do so well. Rigorous health and safety systems and child protection arrangements make the school a secure place where pupils feel safe and confident. The school does much to encourage healthy living and its success has been recognised by a recent Healthy Schools award. Links with other professionals such as educational psychologists and health staff are excellent and provide valuable support to the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led by a strong headteacher whose high expectations towards challenging targets can be seen throughout the provision. She has helped create a school where pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and feel part of a close-knit community. The headteacher is

supported well by other leaders who share her vision and work together very effectively. This teamwork has enabled the school to make good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in assessment and the provision for children in the Foundation Stage, and shows why it is well set to do even better. The leaders have developed good systems to evaluate the provision and identify areas of weakness, and put in strategies to rectify them. However, the leaders recognise that these have not yet proved to be fully effective in addressing the relative weaknesses in provision for ICT and boys' writing in order to get the very best out of pupils.

The school development plan has good priorities for improvement and clear systems to measure its success. The knowledgeable governors play an important part in deciding on the targets and support the staff well.

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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	2
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	2
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?	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?	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?	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

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Keinton Mandeville Primary School, Somerton, TA11 6ES

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school recently. Those who were kind enough to talk to us told me a lot about your school. You clearly like being part of a small school where you all know each other so well. You think that yours is a good school and we agree!

What we found out about your school

- You develop your personal skills exceptionally well. Your behaviour is excellent and you take good care of each other. You know a lot about how to keep safe and live healthy lives.
- Your work is of a good standard and you make quick progress.
- Your teachers are doing a fine job. They are good at making lessons enjoyable and they make sure that they set work at the right level for you.
- The activities planned for you are interesting, and there are plenty of clubs after school that you enjoy.
- You are very well cared for by adults who do all they can to keep you safe.
- The leadership is good. Your headteacher and other leaders know how to improve the school and make this a happy place in which to learn.

What your school needs to do now to be even better

- Make sure all pupils, especially boys, do their best writing at all times. You can help by making every piece of writing as good as you possibly can.
- Provide even more opportunities for you to use your ICT skills in all subjects.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston Lead inspector