

Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123651
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314658
Inspection date	5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	David Wakely
Headteacher	Jane Chubb
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Stembridge Martock TA12 6BP
Telephone number	01460 240507
Fax number	01460 241879

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. Younger pupils are taught in classes with two year groups whilst the older pupils are in classes with a single year group. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic circumstances in the surrounding rural area. Almost all are White British. Their attainment on entry is exceptionally wide but overall it is broadly similar to that usually found. More pupils transfer into the school when they are older than is usually the case in schools of this size. A significant proportion of these pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

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 and serves its community well. It has many strengths and few areas in need of improvement. Pupils quickly settle into school and get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. The school has a very strong commitment to the all-round development of every individual pupil, and this is recognised and appreciated by almost all parents, one of whom commented, 'Every child is valued.' Another parent wrote, 'The school has created a friendly and positive environment for learning in which children's achievements are celebrated and encouraged.' Pupils achieve well and their personal development and well-being are good. This is because they are taught well and the staff team provides effective care, guidance and support, including some very successful arrangements for helpful academic guidance. The headteacher provides good leadership and, together with governors and other leaders, has an accurate view of the school's performance. The school has successfully addressed the few issues identified in the last inspection report and has a good capacity to improve further.

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the early identification of their needs and the well-focused additional support they receive. Most of the more able pupils also make good progress but a few do not achieve their full potential. Teaching is good, with many interesting activities to stimulate the pupils. However, teachers do not always ensure work is matched to their pupils' wide range of abilities. In a few lessons, all the pupils are given the same work, with similar levels of support and time given to complete work. This slows the pace of learning for some, particularly the more able.

The curriculum is good and pupils say they enjoy their time in school, particularly the many additional activities and events. The curriculum is being adapted well to reflect national developments in English and mathematics, but as yet, there is only limited guidance to help teachers plan to develop the pupils' skills in other subjects and establish links between them. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school, suggesting innovative ideas and many keenly taking on additional responsibilities such as being eco warriors, school councillors or house captains.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team and subject leaders energetically promote improvements. There are frequent checks on the school's performance, such as the quality of teaching, and judgements made are accurate. However, the scheduling of such checks is not sufficiently systematic and the information gained from them is not always clearly summarised for use in planning improvements or conducting further checks.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good in the Foundation Stage. The sensitive and flexible approaches for introducing children to school enable them to make good progress from the time they start at school. This is recognised and appreciated by parents, one of whom wrote, 'My child's transition to Reception was handled so well by the school with its cohesive 'family' approach that it has been a happy and positive time in his life.' On entry, a significant proportion of children are below national expectations in English and mathematical skills, whilst others are above expectations in most aspects. By the end of the year, most children are attaining the levels expected nationally, and some are exceeding them, having made particularly good progress in language and mathematical

skills. Within the context of a mixed Reception and Year 1 class, the teacher and teaching assistants provide a good range of learning experiences, indoors and out, with satisfactory opportunities to learn independently through play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers set work that is accurately matched to the pupils' wide range of abilities and suitably challenges them all, including the more able.
- Adopt more systematic ways of checking aspects of the school's performance and how the findings are recorded for future consideration.
- Establish clear guidance on planning for developing skills and establishing links across the curriculum, beyond the core subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards fluctuate over time, with relatively few pupils in each year group, but overall they are above average and achievement is good. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, with almost all pupils attaining the nationally expected levels for their age. Good progress in Years 3 to 6, including by those pupils who join the school after Year 2, results in above-average standards by the end of Year 6. One parent new to the school, reflecting on this, wrote, 'We can't believe how much progress our child has made since being at Kingsbury.' Standards have recently been higher in English and science than in mathematics but, following a school focus on mathematical calculation, the standards achieved by pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 have improved. Frequent staff changes led to a slowing of progress by a few pupils in Years 1 and 2, but these pupils are now on track to attain their targets at the end of this year. Targets for Year 6 pupils were raised following particularly good progress made in Year 5 last year, although not all of the more able pupils are predicted to exceed national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, with particular strengths in moral and social development. Pupils behave well and almost all are very thoughtful in the way they support one another. Pupils respond very positively to the way the school most effectively encourages them to take on responsibilities around the school and in the community. Parents recognise these characteristics, one commenting, 'We are continually impressed with the behaviour and attitude of pupils towards each other, staff and visitors.' Another wrote, 'They are given choices, listened to, given responsibilities and plenty of encouragement.' These opportunities contribute well to the good level of skills needed for the next stage of their education and adult life. Pupils speak earnestly about the importance of a healthy diet, appreciate the improved school dinners with 'no more grey broccoli' and the daily physical activity programme. They feel safe and know whom to turn to if worried about something. Attendance fluctuates and is satisfactory. Very recently, it has improved in response to the effective steps taken by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan interesting activities that stimulate and encourage pupils and in most lessons almost all pupils are absorbed in their work. Effective use is made of the relatively small hall and computer suite by splitting whole classes and deploying teaching assistants effectively to enable pupils to be taught in smaller groups. This leads to good learning. Teachers assess their pupils' progress well. In the Foundation Stage, the teacher and teaching assistants carefully observe and record children's responses to activities. In the older classes, in Years 3–6, teachers provide detailed feedback when marking work, helping to explain the next steps pupils need to take to improve. The recent introduction of 'learning walls' is helping pupils to become even more involved and reflective about their learning, and teachers ensure pupils are very clear about their short-term targets. In those lessons where learning is less rapid, teachers have not made the best use of the good assessment information available. They set their pupils the same challenges within the same timescales, with the level of expectation and challenge for the more able not being high enough. Pupils with learning difficulties are often supported effectively by an adult but the more able pupils receive additional help less often and consequently do not always make such good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad curriculum includes many practical experiences that contribute well to pupils' enthusiasm for school. Imaginative materials have been introduced that very effectively promote pupils' social and emotional development. The recent Healthy School Award reflects the successful commitment to other aspects of pupils' personal development. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The long-established four-year rolling programme of topics is under review. It does not currently provide sufficient guidance on how to plan for a progression in skills in, for example, geography or history, or opportunities to develop these skills more systematically by linking one subject to another. The curriculum is enriched well by a broad range of additional activities, international links, visits and visitors, successfully broadening pupils' horizons beyond their immediate community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's commitment to the individual needs of every pupil is a strength recognised by parents. One wrote, 'The staff are always supportive and helpful.' There is sensitive and discrete provision for vulnerable pupils and effective liaison with other professionals to help meet their needs. All the statutory procedures designed to safeguard pupils are implemented rigorously and are constantly under review by the governors. The good care and support contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and self-esteem. Academic guidance has improved significantly with the introduction of new approaches, such as carefully layered targets. Older pupils in particular are exceptionally clear about what it is they are learning, how they can improve and their short-term targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has raised the profile of the leadership team. Subject leaders provide good role models for their colleagues and are having a strong impact on developments, for example, the work on personal and emotional education and in developing new strategies for teaching mathematics. The headteacher has established efficient ways of gathering assessment information about all pupils and effectively tracks their progress individually and collectively. These data are used well to identify trends in progress by individuals or groups, to deploy additional support where needed, and to help set targets for the end of each year. Although the school has an accurate view of its performance, the checking of some aspects is not always systematically planned or conducted. In a few instances, useful activities, such as checking 'progress books' or observing lessons, are not followed up by formally recording and sharing the main findings. This reduces their influence on any plans or activities designed to bring about improvement. The governors are well led and have effective systems for keeping themselves informed about the school. They are fully engaged in all key decisions and successfully hold the school to account.

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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?	2
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?	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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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

12 December 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Kingsbury Episcopi Primary School, Martock, Somerset TA12 6BP

- Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. My colleague and I enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. We are pleased to say that you are right to say yours is a good school. Here are some of the highlights:
- You work hard and make good progress in your lessons and achieve well by the time you leave the school.
- You behave well and help make everyone, including those children new to the school, feel welcome and part of the family.
- Your teachers plan lots of interesting and exciting things for you in the classroom as well as special events and activities.
- The school encourages you to have your own ideas.
- We are particularly impressed by the way so many of you take a lead around the school and on behalf of the school in the local area with such things as the apprentice scheme, being 'members of parliament', house captains, school councillors or eco warriors.
- The staff take good care of you and help you when you have a problem or are worried about something.
- The teachers are very good at helping you to think about what you need to learn next and how you might improve.
- The headteacher and other leaders have lots of ideas and are good at making improvements around the school.
- We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on just three things to make the school even better. They are to:
 - help teachers to always set work that is neither too hard or too easy and to give those of you who sometimes find your work easy more challenging things to do
 - make sure leaders are clear about the ways they check the work of the school and how they share what they have found out with the rest of the staff
 - produce more guidance for teachers when they are planning topics across different subjects to help them build on the things you have already learnt to do.

I know you will want to help everyone make your school even better than it is.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerly (Lead Inspector)