

Kingsfield First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124059
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314793
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Sproson
Headteacher	Jason Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Gunn Street Biddulph Stoke-on-Trent ST8 6AY
Telephone number	01782 297800
Fax number	01782 297800

Age group	3–9
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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 primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and no pupil has a statement for special educational need.

The headteacher has been in post for just over one year.

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. It is led and managed well and, as a result, pupils' personal development is good and they achieve well. Its calm, friendly atmosphere helps pupils feel happy, safe and well looked after. They respect others, form good relationships and know staff will help them if problems arise. They behave well, enjoy learning and work hard. They know what to do to stay safe, fit and healthy and enjoy the many clubs and activities the school organises. Parents are very positive about the school and all that it does to help their children succeed.

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age. Their language skills are particularly low. By the end of the Foundation Stage, good teaching and an effective curriculum help children attain average standards in all but literacy. The headteacher and staff work hard to monitor the school's work and improve the quality of education pupils receive. The impact is seen, for example, in the overall good teaching, which ensures that pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 to 4. By the end of Year 4, pupils attain overall average standards. More opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects have helped to raise standards in Year 4. Standards in mathematics are above average because provision in this subject is good. Good support for pupils who need additional help ensures they achieve well. Teaching, while generally good, varies from satisfactory to outstanding. In the satisfactory lessons, the work is not always matched accurately to pupils' needs and so they do not always achieve well. With too few opportunities for pupils to carry out practical activities and work independently in some classes, the curriculum is only satisfactory. Many out-of-class activities enhance pupils' learning well. Pastoral care is good. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The practice of setting targets to help pupils improve their work is new and not established well in every class. Marking is often good in literacy, but in other subjects the practice is more variable and pupils are not involved enough in evaluating their work and determining their own targets.

The headteacher has established a good team spirit in the school. He has involved all staff and governors in evaluating the school's performance and identifying the right improvement priorities. With effective support from the local authority, the quality of teaching has improved and standards are rising. Monitoring procedures are rigorous and all leaders, including subject leaders, know what needs to be done to help pupils achieve more. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and leaders are well capable of making further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching helps children achieve well. Many children enter the Nursery with weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and aspects of personal development, so good emphasis is given to addressing these. The work on learning letters and sounds and frequent opportunities to speak are particularly effective in helping children to communicate more confidently. Well-structured and interesting activities encourage children to explore and have fun. As they progress through the Reception year, they learn to become independent as they choose from a wide range of activities inside and out. The outside area is now more interesting and accessible but the range of resources and activities children have to choose from to learn by themselves is limited. Leadership and management are good. The work is planned well to match each child's needs so that they become confident and happy young learners. Staff check that children explore everything and sensitively steer children to activities that some sometimes find more challenging, for example, writing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good in all classes and so that work is appropriately matched to pupils' needs.
- Provide pupils with effective guidance as to how to improve their work in all subjects and involve them more in assessing their work and setting their targets.
- Develop the curriculum so that it stimulates more active and independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. School records and pupils' work indicate that standards are rising and that pupils are well on track to achieve the challenging targets that they are set. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain slightly above average standards in reading and mathematics. Standards are average in writing because the word-building strategies brought in this year to raise standards in literacy have not been in place long enough to have had maximum impact. As a result of better planning for problem solving and more emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics' skills, standards are above average in mathematics in Year 4. Standards are average in English and science. Achievement in reading is good throughout the school. Improved reading resources, particularly books to interest boys, have helped to raise standards in reading. Pupils who need additional help with their learning achieve well through the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Although one or two boys show occasional poor behaviour, behaviour is generally good. Pupils are attentive and respond well, especially when lessons are exciting and challenging. They are polite and friendly and willingly help others. They know how to stay safe and who to go to if they feel worried. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is satisfactory. School council members make decisions, for example, regarding playground activities, recycling projects and fund raising. They donate to various charities but are not as involved as they might be within the local community. They explore other cultures and beliefs and questions of right and wrong, and so grow as thoughtful and considerate young people. International links with Australia promote pupils' good understanding of cultural diversity in the wider world. Pupils enjoy numerous sports activities and many make healthy choices with their school meals and packed lunches. Many visits and visitors extend their awareness of the world of work and leisure. Children start school with below average social skills. They leave in Year 4 as responsible young people. This, coupled with good achievement in their basic skills, means they are well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the best lessons, good planning involving interesting activities ensures pupils are challenged fully and enjoy learning. Lively presentations, regular discussions and probing questions

encourage pupils to share ideas and thus learn effectively. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to illustrate information more clearly for pupils. They maximise the expertise of teaching assistants to support pupils who need extra help or higher levels of challenge so that they achieve well. In most classes, teachers' expectations are high and they use targets effectively to extend pupils' learning. In one or two classes, work in books shows that pupils of all abilities sometimes do the same work. As a consequence, the more able are insufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils find the work too difficult. In the few lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the pace of learning is too slow to sustain good progress. Despite these occasional weaknesses, relationships between pupils and staff are good and pupils always try their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent improvements to the curriculum include topic-based themes that make learning relevant to pupils' needs and capture their imagination. These developments are still relatively new and pupils have too few opportunities to work independently. Developing pupils' word-building and writing skills have been priorities this year and, as a result, standards in literacy are rising. Through more practical activities, for example in mathematics, and better use of technology to present lessons, pupils' progress has improved. In a few classes, such practical opportunities are limited and there is an over-reliance on worksheets that do not always match pupils' needs effectively. More resources and activities to motivate the boys have helped them enjoy learning and achieve more. The teaching of French in Years 3 and 4 has boosted pupils' knowledge of other cultures and traditions. Pupils who are less confident achieve well because specific additional activities are planned to help them. Many visits, visitors and other activities, for example, the cookery and multi-skills clubs, add excitement to pupils' learning and extend their skills. A good programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care arrangements are good. Pupils say that staff listen to them if they need help. Child protection, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are all secure. Pupils who have specific needs are supported sensitively and external agencies consulted where necessary to provide specialist guidance. Following diligent monitoring, attendance is now satisfactory and pupils arrive punctually. Children are supported well when they first start school and pupils in Year 4 feel well prepared for their middle schools.

Procedures to monitor pupils' progress are good, enabling the school to identify quickly any pupils who are falling behind so that they can be offered effective additional support with their learning. The setting of individual targets is a recent development that is not yet effective in every class. Pupils rarely assess their own work to decide what they need to do to improve. Marking is effective in literacy, but elsewhere the practice is inconsistent in helping pupils understand what they are doing well or how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and staff ensure that the school runs in an orderly manner and that pupils are safe and happy. In partnership with the local authority, the headteacher has driven the school's good improvement over the last year. He has established rigorous procedures to monitor the work of the school in order to raise performance. Staff have had excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills and, as a result, teaching has improved. This has resulted in higher standards in literacy and mathematics after their decline following the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 this year are higher than those in the school's 2007 national test results. All leaders are involved in school development and carry out their roles successfully. Sometimes checks to ensure that initiatives are implemented fully are not sufficiently demanding. This results in inconsistencies in, for example, the quality of teachers' marking. Governors support the school well. Through regular visits, they are increasingly involved in monitoring the school's performance and asking probing questions regarding developments. Despite falling rolls, finances are managed well. Governors promote good links with parents and other schools.

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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	3
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	3
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?	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?	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

3 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsfield First School, Biddulph ST8 6AY

I am writing to tell you what we found out when we came to your school recently to look at the work you do and to talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so friendly, polite and well behaved. We enjoyed talking to you about the many clubs you can join and all that you know about healthy eating and keeping fit and safe. You clearly understand what is right and what is wrong and show care and consideration for others. We particularly liked the way you look after younger children in the playground and how much you know about the cultures and traditions of people from other countries.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and that most of you attend regularly. We think your school is a good school. It is run well and is giving you a good education. Everyone works hard to help you make good progress. Most of the lessons you do are interesting and well planned. Those of you who need extra help with your learning make good progress because the school helps you learn. You are really well prepared for life at your next school. We are pleased yours is a happy and interesting school and that you and your parents are pleased with it.

There are many things that your headteacher, the staff and the governors want to improve because they want your school to get even better! These are the things that need doing first.

- Make sure that the lessons you have are always good and that all of you have the work you need to achieve well.
- Make sure you have more guidance as to how to improve your work and that you check your own work and decide what you need to do next.
- Make sure that teachers plan work that gives you more opportunities to explore by yourselves and provide you with more challenging, practical activities.

There are things you could do to help, too. For example, all of you should try to come to school every day; you should ask for harder work if you need it and decide for yourselves what you think your targets should be.

I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector

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Rajinder Harrison
Lead inspector