

Kington St Michael Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126332
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315499
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Alvis
Headteacher	Tracy Cornelius
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	The Ridings Kington St Michael Chippenham SN14 6JG
Telephone number	01249 750454
Fax number	01249 750454

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of assessment, how well teachers challenge pupils to do their best especially in Years 3 to 6 and how successful the school is in reversing the decline in standards in mathematics and writing seen in the Year 6 national tests last year. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of school tracking and assessment data, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work and discussions with the headteacher, mathematics co-ordinator, members of the governing body and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of the Ofsted questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that findings in the school's self-assessment are not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kington St Michael is a small village primary school where the majority of classes have more than one year group. It is growing in popularity and numbers are rising. The current headteacher has been in post for four months. Attainment on entry is generally around that usually found, although it has declined in recent years. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although higher in some year groups. None of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kington St Michael is a good school, with some outstanding features. In particular, the level of care and support the school provides is excellent. As a result, pupils enjoy school very much and their personal development is outstanding. Parents praise these aspects of the school's work highly and one typically wrote, 'It is a warm, welcoming, friendly learning environment for our children to be in. All staff support and encourage the children to develop their confidence, independence and much more.'

The school pays excellent attention to pupils' welfare, with regular and rigorous risk assessments in place. Child protection and staff vetting arrangements fully meet requirements. As a result, pupils feel very safe and well cared for. They have a very good awareness of how to keep safe, for example, on the roads or in water. From the time they enter the school, pupils receive outstanding pastoral support and guidance so that by Year 6 they are confident, thoughtful, polite and very helpful young people. Behaviour and relationships are excellent and attendance is well above average. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy lessons, saying learning is fun. They especially enjoy the new activities they have in mathematics lessons. Pupils work exceptionally well together and tackle difficult tasks confidently, which helps prepare them especially well for their future economic well-being. Pupils' contribution to the school and local community is especially good, particularly through the way they help care for younger pupils on their arrival at school or at playtimes. They have a very good understanding of citizenship, demonstrated through their commitment to recycling and the wealth of fundraising activities. Pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise is good and the school is increasing this further through its work towards 'Healthy School' status.

Achievement is good and, by the time pupils leave, standards are generally above average in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, they declined in the Year 6 national tests for English and mathematics as fewer pupils than previously reached the higher levels. This was partly a result of pupil illness and new arrivals in the small year group. However, staff changes led to some important weaknesses in pupils' progress not being identified early enough. Since then, the new headteacher has put in place a number of very good strategies which are already having a positive impact, especially in mathematics, where progress this year has been very good. Pupils make good progress in writing, particularly in using a range of vocabulary to make their work more interesting. However, staff recognise that pupils still spell too many words incorrectly and are working hard to address this.

Major reasons for the school's success is the excellent direction given to its work by the headteacher and the high quality teamwork amongst staff. Governors are very supportive and contribute well to school monitoring and development. As a result, there is a shared commitment and consistent approach to improvement, which benefits pupils especially well. The systems put in place since September to monitor the school's work are excellent. This helps staff to speedily and accurately identify weaknesses, for example, in mental mathematics and successfully address them. Subject leaders have more opportunities to monitor provision and progress and contribute well to school development. Improvement in the last four months has been rapid. Staff are well aware that still more needs to be done and their success over the past year indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.

Very good new procedures are in place for checking on pupils' progress. More regular assessment identifies accurately the levels at which different pupils are working. This ensures challenging

improvement targets are set, helping the higher-attaining pupils to do as well as they should. The school is well on course to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in the Year 6 national tests this year and to attain the above-average standards seen in previous years. Very good monitoring of different groups of pupils, including those who have learning, language or social difficulties, helps ensure that programmes of work are tailored successfully to their needs. As a result, these pupils achieve as well as their classmates.

The quality of education is good, including in the Foundation Stage. A strong feature of teaching is the consistent approach and the excellent work ethic seen in all classes. Well-planned lessons take good account of pupils working at different stages and challenge them to do their best. A practical, problem-solving approach enthuses and motivates pupils. Pupils are more involved in checking on how well they are doing and are becoming very good at challenging themselves to do even better. However, this aspect of learning is fairly new and the full impact on progress has yet to be seen. The breadth of the curriculum is very good, allowing pupils to do well in many subjects; for example, they produce high quality art work. New programmes of work for reading, writing and mathematics and arrangements to teach these subjects in smaller groups are helping to raise standards. However, the full effect of these developments has yet to be seen. Pupils have a wealth of extra activities, for example, in after-school clubs, which enhance their learning and enjoyment of school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision is well led and managed. Several parents commented on the success of the excellent induction procedures, which help children settle in to school well and enjoy learning. Because of the good teaching and curriculum, children achieve well and standards are slightly above expectations on entry to Year 1. They are lower in some social and mathematical skills. This is especially so for boys, a number of whom find it difficult to concentrate and listen well. Nevertheless, most children behave very well. The creation of an exceptionally exciting and stimulating environment inspires children to learn. Staff take every opportunity to check on children's progress so tasks are well matched to the level at which they are working. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those where children can find out things for themselves. This helps children develop confidence and independence. The new outdoor area provides very well for physical development, although there has not been sufficient time to see the full effect on children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially through increasing pupils' capacity to spell words correctly in all their written work.

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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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kington St Michael C of E VA Primary School, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6JG

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I particularly want to thank the school council, who gave up their time to talk to me. I think your school is good and I am delighted that you and your parents agree.

Here are some of the things I found out were especially good about the school:

- You enjoy school very much, work hard and make good progress. This year you have made especially good progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. I also noticed that your art work is very good.
- You get on very well together and your behaviour is outstanding. I was especially impressed by how confident, thoughtful and helpful you are. Older pupils are excellent at helping look after the younger ones.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you lots of especially good advice on how you can improve your work. You are very good at taking their advice too.
- You are taught well and have a very good range of interesting and challenging activities, which helps you to do well.
- You have a very good headteacher and, together with staff and governors, she is working successfully to help your school get even better.

Here is what I have asked your school to improve:

- Your written work is improving well as you use more interesting words, but you do not always spell words accurately so I have asked staff to help you improve this. You can help by always trying to spell words correctly.

Yours sincerely

D Wilkinson Lead Inspector