

King's Furlong Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116230
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	319470
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Walsingham
Headteacher	Mrs E Perry
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 1999
School address	Upper Chestnut Drive Basingstoke RG21 8YJ
Telephone number	01256 327024
Fax number	01256 475733

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average infant and nursery school is situated in an area of mixed housing. The numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. There are above the expected numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average, and no pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school is an Investors in People organisation and it has the ICT Mark and the Enhanced Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory level of education for its pupils. It has some good features including pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support of pupils. The relatively new senior management team have already introduced changes that reinforce these pastoral aspects, but that are also addressing the need to improve academic standards and achievement.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were average. This improved on the previous year's results when standards in mathematics were well below average. In response, the school successfully introduced changes to the curriculum, and pupils responded well to an emphasis on thinking skills and practical problem-solving opportunities in mathematics, and support for literacy throughout the curriculum. The school also introduced a more rigorous collection, analysis and use of pupil progress data that now enables any underachievement to be quickly identified. These measures have had a positive impact on standards and achievement levels.

Achievement levels are satisfactory and reflect the standard of teaching and learning. There is some good teaching, but there are inconsistencies that result in progress levels slowing in some classes. For example, some teachers' planning describes the task rather than what learning they are expecting from the pupils. In some classes the use of targets to help pupils learn is inconsistent. The school has begun to address this through in-service training in areas such as the questioning skills of teachers. Further training for subject co-ordinators is required, in order that the more rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning, standards and achievement can take place.

The outstanding contribution that pupils make to the community is a good illustration of their good personal development. These young people talk excitedly about their school council and how they help out around the school. They are rightly proud of the various fund-raising activities they conduct on behalf of many charities. The school has also developed good partnerships that benefit the pupils. In particular, it has worked successfully to develop positive relationships with parents, including those whose children are learning English as an additional language. These reflect the inclusive nature of the school. When Polish parents read a story in their native language, the opportunity was taken to explore with English-speaking pupils how they felt about not knowing the language and relying on visual clues only.

Pupils, from pre-school onwards, feel safe and secure. Parental comments such as 'a lovely, caring atmosphere', 'the school has a good ethos and is very welcoming', all reflect their appreciation of the good levels of care, support and guidance.

Governors support the school well and participate in the setting of satisfactory but increasingly more challenging targets for school performance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The induction arrangements for entry into the nursery are thorough, and result in the children settling quickly. Similarly, the transition into Reception is smooth and the children are happy and feel safe. The recent addition of good, extensive canopies now enables children to play outside for prolonged periods throughout the year. As a consequence of consistently sound teaching the children make satisfactory progress, and leave the Reception class achieving levels expected for their age. The curriculum is good, with appropriate opportunities for the children to make choices. The school realises the need for curriculum plans, for example in the Reception area, to be sharper still in pinpointing what pupils should learn in each lesson. The children benefit well from the support of the teaching assistants in lessons.

What the school should do to improve further

- Achievement levels through ensuring that all teaching is good.
- Develop the role of middle managers in evaluating their areas of responsibility, particularly with regard to monitoring standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter Year 1 with strengths in knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal development. The relative weakness is in writing. By the end of Year 2 pupils in 2007 achieved satisfactorily and attained average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This improvement from the previous year reflects the changes put in place to the curriculum as well as the use of improved assessment strategies and the good tracking of pupils and groups. School records show that there is some difference between the standards of boys and girls in Reception, but that this is successfully addressed. In work seen, and also in the tracking records there is evidence that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching result in achievement levels varying across Years 1 and 2. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve satisfactorily.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

One parent reflected the views of others when writing, 'the pupils always show kindness, politeness and respect for others'. Pupils are happy, enjoy school and are eager to learn. They behave well, and thrive in a caring climate, free from unkind behaviour. For example, the school council made a school bear called 'Cuddles' which is taken to any pupil they see looking upset, in order to help them feel better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Playground buddies and a 'friendship stop' help ensure no one is left out of any playground activity. The school has taken good steps to improve attendance. Despite the fact that a few families persist in taking their children on holiday during term-time, attendance is now broadly average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy, and are very willing to participate in exercise, regularly using the school's 'adventure and trim trail'. Topics such as 'people we can trust', 'keeping safe in different places', and 'working as a team' are covered well and impact well on pupils' personal development. The contribution pupils make through their active school council, fund raising for charities locally and in other countries, and

dancing and singing in local community festivals is exemplary. The sound literacy and numeracy skills, which pupils develop, provide a firm base for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, pupils' progress levels vary, reflecting the mix of satisfactory and some good teaching across the school. In all lessons, warm relationships help ensure that pupils adopt positive attitudes and are motivated. They react well to the good variety of activities and the well-chosen practical resources that are provided in the best lessons. This is particularly relevant to those pupils at an early stage of learning English. Teachers make good use of the wide range of assessment information that they now have. However not all teachers make it sufficiently clear in their planning what the pupils are expected to learn, rather than what task they are to do. In the less effective lessons, opportunities are missed to promote thinking skills. Teachers use some good questioning skills to challenge and support pupils' learning. In most, but not all lessons, there are clear explanations of lesson objectives which give pupils a clear idea as to what they are aiming for. There are some missed opportunities in lessons and in some teacher's marking to reinforce pupils' knowledge of their targets and what the next steps are in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Good recent changes to the English and mathematics curriculum have helped to ensure it better meets the needs of all pupils. Strengthening of links in subjects such as history has ensured pupils use and develop their literacy skills in areas across the curriculum. Similarly, in mathematics, the priority given to the development of thinking and problem-solving skills is starting to feed through to better progress. The good curriculum is effectively enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and special events that impact well on pupils' personal development. Pupils enthusiastically respond to the good range of clubs on offer, including country dancing, a 'Polish Club' and an enthusiastic choir, all of which add to the pupils enjoyment of school and foster new interests. A detailed personal, health and social education programme supports well the emotional needs of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents comment on the high quality of pastoral care within the school. The school has worked successfully to establish good relationships with parents. It has responded very well to their requests to become more involved with their children's learning through initiatives like 'Walk the school with your child' and 'Share a lesson with your child'. Health and safety procedures and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and pupils feel safe. The school has achieved the Enhanced Award for Healthy Schools and is striving to improve provision further by improving the quality of packed lunches, including working with the local secondary school. The school has very strong procedures for supporting and guiding vulnerable pupils and those who have English as an additional language. The commitment to care is demonstrated by staff learning a foreign language so that pupils' needs are better met. Also some pupils are being trained as interpreters so they can more effectively support their peers. The performance of

pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and of pupils with English as an additional language, is particularly well tracked. All pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy, and most know how to use them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Through their monitoring and effective teamwork, the headteacher and her deputy have identified very relevant areas for change. Developments, such as the introduction of regular progress meetings with teachers have already contributed to improving standards and achievement. This, together with improvements in attendance, and in the creative curriculum since the last inspection, reflects the school's good capacity to improve. The regular monitoring of teaching and the introduction of peer-observations between teachers is now enabling good practice to be shared more effectively. Such developments have yet to fully impact on the overall quality of teaching. Whilst subject co-ordinators and management in the Foundation Stage have monitoring responsibilities, the school realises the need to develop these roles further. This is particularly relevant with regard to the evaluation of standards and achievement. Governors give good support, visit the school regularly, and are therefore able to raise relevant questions of the school.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

25 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of King's Furlong Infant School and Nursery, Basingstoke, RG21 8YJ

We really enjoyed our recent visit, and listened carefully when you talked about your work and what you like about your school. Thank you for your welcome.

We believe your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. We agree with you that it does many things well:

- you told us that the adults in school make you feel safe and well cared for
- we believe that you learn well about how to stay safe and healthy. You behave well and are kind to each other. Well done!
- we really liked the way you are given so many very good chances to get involved in school life and take part in events outside school. You obviously like the work of the school council
- your school is doing well at checking how well you are doing
- we liked the way that your school is friendly and that you make new pupils so welcome. This is important for those of you who cannot speak English. Well done again!
- we liked the recent changes that your headteacher and her staff have made, and the way this has helped you to improve your work.

We have asked the school to:

- make sure that all lessons are good so that you can make even better progress in your work
- give more responsibility to some subject managers.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector.