

Knowsley Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104423
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	324043
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	181
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Taylor
Headteacher	Miss Fairhurst
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sugar Lane Knowsley Prescot Merseyside L34 0ER
Telephone number	0151 2895349
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

When Knowsley Village was inspected in November 2007, it was given a notice to improve and asked to address issues related to: standards and achievement; teaching and learning; the curriculum; academic guidance and support; and leadership and management. It was subsequently visited in June 2008 when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress overall with good progress in leadership and management.

This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated in a semi-rural area. It has a wide catchment area with a higher than average proportion of pupils experiencing some challenging social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. An executive headteacher has been in post since April 2008. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. There is a childcare provision on site, which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The improvement identified at the monitoring visit in June 2008 has been sustained and strengthened. The inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher is driving the school forward strongly so that it is improving in leaps and bounds. As a result, this is now a good and improving school giving good value for money. It has made very good progress in tackling all the issues identified at the last inspection. Standards have risen significantly and achievement is good because teaching is of consistently good quality. Recently introduced procedures for checking on pupils' progress enable underachievement to be identified quickly and nipped in the bud. Parents comment warmly on the education the school provides and on how much it has improved. 'My children really enjoy school. They come home excited by what they have learned,' and 'The school is fast becoming a school that teachers, children and parents can be proud to be associated with,' were typical comments.

From below expected skill levels when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move up through the school. Standards are rising rapidly because teachers' expectations are high. The latest results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 standards rose significantly in the provisional 2008 test results to above the 2007 national average. Demanding targets were reached for the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. However, the proportion attaining the higher levels was disappointingly low. The school is working hard to rectify this by increasing its level of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Inspection evidence shows that these pupils are now also making good progress and that the demanding targets are realistic. The key to improving achievement lies in the school's relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning for all pupils. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support more vulnerable pupils so that they too make good progress. Regular and robust monitoring of teaching takes place with the outcomes used to identify how individual teachers can improve their effectiveness. Teachers are meticulous in preparing their lessons but do not routinely use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to extend pupils' learning even further.

This is a happy school in which smiles and laughter are the order of the day. Strong relationships underpin all the school does. As a result, pupils show good levels of respect for each other and adults. All feel equally valued. Their behaviour is exemplary in classrooms and around school. They feel safe in school. Procedures and policies for ensuring pupils' safety are in place and reviewed regularly. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy taking on responsibilities such as becoming friendship buddies. Pupils are enthusiastic about the exciting opportunities that have been introduced into the new curriculum such as 'the sky and beyond' which excite them and extend their reading, writing and mathematics skills. By the time they leave, pupils are articulate and confident young people ready to take full advantage of the next steps in their education.

The executive headteacher's outstanding leadership is providing the school with a clear sense of purpose. Good levels of teamwork are evident in the pursuit of raising standards and achievement. The improvements already put into place and their impact on raising standards and achievement indicate that the school has outstanding capacity to improve even further.

Good governance has also played its role in supporting improvement. Governors have worked effectively to tackle weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They are now asking relevant questions and seeking necessary information to hold the school rigorously to account.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the EYFS is good. Children's personal development and the levels of care, guidance and support the school provides are outstanding. Children make good progress in their learning. Their starting points are generally below those typical for their age, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills as well as their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the EYFS standards are average and sometimes above average because teaching is good and the range of activities they are presented with stimulates children's interest and learning. Their progress is rigorously checked so that adults know the children's strengths and where they need to target extra support. The learning environment is safe, extremely caring and stimulating. Clear routines provide pupils with structure and stability. Consequently, they make outstanding progress in developing confidence, independence and inquisitiveness. Because pre-nursery and nursery children are taught together, transition into the EYFS is seamless and outstandingly successful. Links with outside agencies such as the school nurse and speech therapists are used highly effectively to support more vulnerable children. Good leadership and management ensure that resources are used effectively to promote children's learning and sense of well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that the demanding targets for pupils attaining the higher levels in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 are met.
- Develop the use of ICT to make teaching even more effective and extend learning further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Year 2 as seen in results in the national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were above average in 2008. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels rose significantly in comparison to 2007, especially in writing. Good progress and achievement are maintained in Key Stage 2 where standards are also rising steeply. In 2008 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 rose significantly above the broadly average levels attained in 2007, and demanding targets were met. However, the proportion attaining the higher levels was too low and was similar to that of 2007. The school is tackling this rigorously. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well because of the effective support and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school as seen in their happy, smiling faces. Attendance levels are satisfactory and improving because the school is doing all it can to make sure that attending regularly is given a high priority. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils show a good sense of right and wrong and behave outstandingly well. They are polite and welcoming to each other, adults and visitors. However, pupils' cultural awareness and

understanding of life in a multicultural society is a less well developed aspect of their personal development. Pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. They know what foods are good for them and the dangers of substance abuse, for example. Pupils enjoy working in the local community by supporting local and national charities. The active school council enables them to contribute positively by improving the outdoor facilities in the playground, for example.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good, purposeful teaching enables pupils to make good progress at all stages. Teachers prepare their lessons meticulously. Their plans include a variety of activities to keep pupils interested and make learning enjoyable. Teaching does not always take advantage of opportunities to use ICT to enhance learning. Relationships in classrooms are strong with the result that pupils behave exceptionally well. Teachers use challenging questioning skilfully to encourage pupils' thinking skills and help them become independent learners. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning; they are especially effective in supporting more vulnerable pupils so that they too make good progress. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they are given to work collaboratively in groups and pairs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Their comments are usually helpful in indicating what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum is broad and balanced. Developments such as the introduction of exciting themes and topics add extra levels of interest to pupils' learning and support the development of their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work on rain forests, for example, and were proud to show off their work. However, the use of ICT to develop pupils' learning further is not routinely exploited in all subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly thorough and effective. Their needs are identified early and specific intervention programmes boost the progress these pupils make. The range of enrichment activities is good and adds to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. There are several trips out, including a residential for older pupils. Large numbers take part in sporting enrichment activities. Pupils say how much they enjoy learning Spanish.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that adults will help them with any problems. Adults know the individual pupils very well and form trusting relationships with them. The school meets current government safeguarding requirements. The school has established good links with outside agencies to make sure that effective support is provided when a need is identified. Transition arrangements are strong. Year 6 pupils transfer to an unusually high number of secondary schools. All say that everything possible has been done to prepare for their move. All are looking forward to the next stage in their education although, when asked, all said how much they would miss their present school. 'The teachers here are great. They want us to do our best. I'll miss them,' was a typical comment. Procedures for checking on

pupils' progress and supporting their academic development have been strengthened and are now good. Pupils know their targets and most know what they need to do to reach them, although marking is not always consistent in helping them do this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The executive headteacher's outstanding leadership has given the school a clear sense of purpose and vision for the future. Effective teamwork is promoted in the pursuit of improvement and equality for all, and in the expectation that all pupils will achieve their potential. The executive headteacher is ably supported by other senior and middle managers who have blossomed in the positive 'can do' way of thinking engendered throughout the school. Managers are enjoying putting into place strategies to raise standards and achievement such as the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and the introduction of robust procedures to check on pupils' progress. Initiatives such as these are bringing about rapid improvement although their impact has yet to be fully felt. Procedures for self-evaluation are extremely thorough and effective and take into account the views of a range of stakeholders. In particular, the views of parents are central to the school's understanding of its overall effectiveness. The outcomes enable the school to identify what it does well and what it needs to do to improve further. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory because pupils' awareness life in a multicultural society and awareness of global issues are still developing.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 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

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm and courteous welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk with so many of you. What you had to say helped confirm our judgements about your school.

You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school. It has improved very quickly since it was last inspected. This is because your headteacher and all the adults working with you know what needs to be done and are doing a really good job to make your school better. As a result, standards are rising rapidly and so is the progress you are making. This would not be possible without your hard work too – well done! You enjoy learning because your teachers go to a lot of trouble to make lessons interesting for you. We were pleased to see the pride you take in your work in your exercise books. All the adults working with you take good care of you so that you feel safe in school. You play your part in the school becoming better and better by behaving so very well in lessons and around the school. Again, well done!

In order to make your school even better we are asking it to do two things:

- make sure that more of you gain the higher levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6
- use computers and the electronic whiteboards more effectively to add even more interest and excitement to your learning.

You have a vital role to play in making sure your school continues to improve and goes from strength to strength in future. I am confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure this happens.