

Kingston School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114954
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326099
Inspection date	28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
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 Trevor Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Webster
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Thundersley Benfleet Essex SS7 3HG
Telephone number	01268 754137
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: recent trends in pupils' attainment on entry; the impact of actions taken by the school to improve standards in English; the achievement of lower attaining boys; and the achievement of pupils who join the school at other than the expected times.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with governors, the headteacher, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed lessons, playtimes and an assembly. They also analysed the school's assessment data and a range of other documents, including the school's self-evaluation and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments in those areas, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class for Reception-age children and begin school with standards that are lower than those expected for their age. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is relatively low. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and there are none who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the percentage who have a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Of these, some have emotional and social difficulties and there is a small number who are autistic. The school has been awarded the Activemark for sports and Healthy Schools status.

The local authority has seconded the headteacher, at times, in an executive role to provide support for other schools. At these times the deputy headteacher has led the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides an outstanding quality of education and pupils of all abilities achieve exceptionally well. This is because teaching and learning are outstanding and the headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with other senior managers and staff, have created a school in which everyone feels valued and there is a successful focus on meeting the individual learning needs of every pupil. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and the school involves them well on all fronts. One parent, reflecting the views of many summed up the school by saying, 'Kingston is a very happy school, like one big family.' Teachers take great care to plan activities that are matched very well to the needs of pupils. Lessons capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning, inspiring them to become exceptional learners. Excellent relationships between teachers and their pupils lay the foundation for pupils to be confident and independent. The planning of learning into small manageable steps means that those who sometimes struggle are also able to make exceptional progress. Marking is good and in some cases outstanding. Teachers consistently give pupils encouragement and celebrate their successes. Even so, there are instances where marking does not create a close enough link between pupils' targets and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and use very effectively the information they gain from assessments to plan the next stages of learning.

Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year. In recent years it has been below that expected with only a few children starting with attainment that exceeds that expected for their age. The result of this has been falling standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2008, the national tests for this stage showed that standards were below average. Recently validated teacher assessments and the work in pupils' books show that standards are currently on course to be above average and that pupils are making good progress. Because they are taught exceptionally well, pupils are able to catch up rapidly in Years 3 to 6, attaining broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The available data reveals a consistent trend of improvement, with the rate of pupils' progress having increased each year for the last three years. From their various starting points the current Year 6 pupils have made exceptional progress and those in Year 5 are on course to attain well above average standards, again indicating outstanding progress and achievement. In addition, the historic pattern of standards in English lagging a little behind those in mathematics has been eradicated. Pupils also do exceedingly well in many other subjects, especially information and communication technology, music and physical education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their behaviour around school and during lessons are outstanding. Lessons exude laughter and happiness and pupils clearly enjoy their learning. One pupil, expressing the view of many said, 'This is a great school, our teachers are brilliant.' Pupils are proud of the work they do, although the good early development of their handwriting does not always manifest itself in the presentation of their work as they get older. The school is exceptionally effective in making sure that pupils know how to stay safe and are fully aware of the importance of regular exercise and eating healthily. While standards are broadly average, pupils' exceptional social skills, their willingness to take responsibility and their ability to work together means they are prepared well for subsequent stages of their education and for the world of work. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the community. Their voice in school matters is well developed and they have an appropriate influence over developments. The school has very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, but works effectively

to ensure that pupils are aware of beliefs and cultures that differ from their own. This, combined with pupils' lively contribution to school activities and their awareness of the needs of others, helps make community cohesion outstanding.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure fully meet current requirements. Pupils are confident that should they have any personal or academic problems they can approach any of the adults and receive the help they need. The inclusion and support for pupils who find learning difficult is excellent with high levels of staffing meaning that pupils can often be taught in small groups or receive individual tuition. The school's 'nurture' group is making an outstanding contribution to the development of pupils who sometimes experience social difficulties. The school takes good care of all pupils in promoting their emotional development and laying the foundation for their academic success.

The curriculum is outstanding with a clear focus on effectively meeting the needs of each pupil. It is arranged so that pupils are taught in mixed-age groups based on their prior attainment in English and mathematics, an approach which, because it meets their needs very well, is helping them to make exceptional progress. In the past lower attaining boys have struggled with these subjects. However, boys, as well as those who join the school midway through their primary education, are achieving outstandingly well. This is particularly so in English where a concerted focus on pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills is paying dividends in terms of increased rates of progress. A wide range of additional activities, especially in the arts and sports, as well as extra support given out of school time, enhance pupils' learning very effectively.

Leadership and management are excellent. In partnership with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, governors ensure that suitably challenging targets are set for attainment.

Procedures to evaluate the school's performance are accurate and rigorous. Governors do an outstanding job. They are regular visitors and are well informed about the work of the school, thus they are effective in holding it to account for the quality of its work. Resources are used very effectively. The school has invested wisely in its skilful group of teaching assistants, support and administrative staff who all make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school is in no way complacent. The headteacher and staff are innovative and strive for constant improvement. Support for staff at all levels, enabling them to develop their skills and adopt new ideas, is outstanding. Leadership ensures that the school reaches out and fully involves parents and the local community and does an excellent job at developing pupils' awareness of their place in a global community. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent and is demonstrated by the systematic increase each year in pupils' progress and in rising standards. The school's strong leadership and willingness to be innovative means that its capacity to improve in the future is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children often start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with weaknesses in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and some aspects of personal development, which impact on their ability to learn. The school works successfully to rectify these shortcomings, using a range of strategies to close the gaps in children's early learning skills. Adults demonstrate a high commitment to the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills. In lessons, independence is promoted outstandingly well through play activities initiated by the children. There is high expectation that children will try to do things independently and good opportunities are provided for them to adapt activities to find things out for themselves. As a consequence, all children make good progress, personal development

is promoted well and they leave the Reception class with good attitudes to learning and the ability to sustain interest in tasks for reasonable periods of time. Assessment evidence shows that standards are rising. Children enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with that expected, except in communication, literacy and language and some aspects of mathematical development. At all times children's safety and well-being are promoted strongly. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects good understanding of child development and is focused on providing a good quality curriculum with opportunities for children to build continuously on their learning. There is a good balance of activities led by an adult and those that the children choose themselves. Adults assess children's skills and knowledge regularly and maintain good records so that activities can be adapted to meet individual needs and to ensure that extra support is given where necessary. Inclusion of children who are very able or who experience difficulties with their learning is outstanding. There is excellent communication with parents and carers who are kept very well informed of their child's welfare and the progress they make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen further approaches to marking so that what pupils need to do to improve their work is consistently linked to their targets for learning.
- Promote with uniform effectiveness pupils' handwriting in order that they can always present their work neatly.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingston Primary School, Thundersley, SS7 3HG

You may recall that Mrs Perry and I visited recently to inspect your school. We were thrilled by what we saw and think your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education.

There are many of you who do not always find learning easy. However, you make remarkable progress in both your academic and personal development. This is because lessons are enjoyable and teachers and teaching assistants are brilliant at encouraging you to do your best. The staff are excellent at making sure that you are safe and that you have all you need to learn as well as possible. It was a real delight to see that you play your part in the success of your school by behaving superbly and working hard. Among the great pleasures of our visit was hearing you sing and seeing you dance as well as play such a wide range of musical instruments. We also know that many of you are excellent in sporting activities. Well done, and thank you for talking to us and being so courteous and helpful.

Mrs Webster and the staff are always looking for ways to make sure that your school remains as good as it can be. With this in mind we have asked the school to:

- make sure that when teachers mark your work they link the advice they give you about how to improve your work with your targets
- help all of you to make best use of your handwriting skills so that you can make all of your work as neat as it can be

You can help with this by always reading and responding to your teachers marking and by checking that your work is as neat as possible.

All the very best for the future, I am sure you will do well.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector