

Kings Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118585
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	326849
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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)	258
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	P Mersh
Headteacher	Stella Garner
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cedar Avenue Gravesend DA12 5JT
Telephone number	01474 566979
Fax number	01474 567767

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2009
Inspection number	326849

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Kings Farm is a slightly larger than average size primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision in Nursery and Reception. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than average and in most classes this includes more than half the pupils. Many of these have speech, language and communication difficulties or need additional support in order to settle to their work. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their education is much higher than is found nationally. The school works in close partnership with the neighbouring special school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kings Farm Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their good personal development is reflected in the quality of their relationships with adults and with each other. One pupil said, expressing the views of many, 'It is easy to make friends and is a fun place.' Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy and know the importance of regular exercise. This is reflected in the school's success in achieving the Activemark and Healthy School status. Visitors from the local emergency services help to raise pupils' awareness of how to keep safe. Children join the school with a range of skills and capabilities but their attainment on entry is generally very low. Communication, language and literacy skills are particularly weak. Good links with parents and carers help children to settle well when they start. Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage although few reach the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year, except in physical development, where children achieve well. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the rest of the school but standards remain well below average by the time they leave.

The satisfactory curriculum rightly prioritises literacy and numeracy. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers in a range of subjects and develop good computing skills. Sports activities led by specialist coaches contribute well to pupils' positive awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are keen to use the sporting equipment available at break times. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and most classes are managed well so that behaviour is good. Teaching is sometimes good, although it is not consistently good enough across the school to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Because planning does not always ensure that all pupils are set suitably challenging tasks, some pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Whole-school systems are in place to check the progress pupils are making but this information is not always used well to match work to the pupils' needs. Although marking praises pupils' efforts and acknowledges their strengths, it is not used consistently to make clear to pupils how they can improve their work. There is some useful target setting but this does not always identify the next steps in each pupil's learning precisely enough to ensure that all pupils are moving up rapidly to the next level in their learning.

The school is working hard to harness the support of the parents and carers and involve them in their children's learning. This includes workshops on literacy and numeracy and a weekly invitation to eat in the dining area at lunchtime. Senior leaders have set a clear direction for the school based on raising standards and achievement. With the support of the local authority, staff working at all levels are responding to the challenge of improving the school. However, some middle leaders and the governing body are not consistently playing a part in monitoring the quality of provision. Although still well below average, standards are rising. Pupils have positive attitudes and are motivated to learn. Consequently, the school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Induction procedures for children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. These include opportunities for children, parents and carers to spend time together at the school as well as individual home visits made by staff. This helps children to settle quickly. One parent of a child in Reception typically commented, 'I could not be happier with the level of support

provided for my child.' In both Nursery and Reception, there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated tasks, promoting children's independence, self-confidence and good personal development. Children transferring to the neighbouring special school at the end of the Nursery year are well supported through close partnership between staff at the two schools. Recent improvements to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) are successfully improving children's reading. Nevertheless, adults do not consistently prioritise sentence structure during speaking and listening tasks and consequently, opportunities to promote children's communication and language skills are sometimes missed. Children enjoy the large climbing equipment in the Reception class. In the outdoor areas, children in both Nursery and Reception develop their awareness of the world around them. Their physical development is particularly well promoted. However, opportunities for them to develop their skills in other areas of learning are more restricted. Standards are generally well below the national average by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school rightly plans to extend the use of the outdoor spaces in all weathers through the addition of a sheltered area. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good so that all pupils throughout the school are set suitably challenging tasks.
- Use marking and target setting consistently to make clear to pupils how to improve their work and what the next steps are in their learning.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders and the governing body in monitoring the quality of provision in order to bring about sustained improvements.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. Standards in assessments at the end of Year 2 and in national tests at the end of Year 6 are well below average. From their very low starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. In 2008, standards in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were higher than in previous years, although they were well below the national averages. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 remained well below the national figures in English, mathematics and science, despite some improvement in English. The school's own assessment information and pupils' current work shows most are making satisfactory progress and some are making good progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally satisfactory as a result of the support they receive. Those who have complex needs and who receive individualised support with their learning make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good. Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in their good behaviour, willingness to work hard in lessons and readiness to join in with all that the school has to offer. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, for example as buddies to pupils new to the school. This helps pupils who join the school other than at the

usual starting times to settle particularly well. Older pupils help the younger ones as peer mediators in Year 5 and through the paired reading scheme. Members of the school council are particularly proud of their good contribution to the school community; for example, they introduced litter patrols to keep the school playground and field tidy. Local elderly residents are welcomed to the school for Christmas lunch hosted by the pupils. Attendance is satisfactory. Good teamwork skills and the satisfactory progress pupils make in their basic skills prepare them soundly for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships are warm and friendly and as a result, pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy their lessons. Pupils appreciate opportunities to work in groups and to talk in pairs about their learning. This promotes strong teamwork and good social skills. Computers are used well to give clear explanations and make learning interesting. Although teaching is sometimes good, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory because it is too variable across classes. In some lessons, teachers use assessment information well to set suitably challenging tasks for all pupils, but this is not consistently the case. Extra help in class from well-briefed additional adults for pupils who find learning difficult helps them to make satisfactory progress. Marking in pupils' books is not always used as a tool to make clear how pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum emphasises literacy and numeracy well in order to raise standards in these subjects. The balance of time available for pupils to study science in particular does not always ensure that pupils have sufficient time to develop their knowledge. Although some links are developing between subjects, opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects are not consistent. Themed events bring the curriculum to life and are helping to encourage pupils' positive attitudes to learning. For example, during the recent literacy week, pupils practised their writing skills through a variety of activities based on the theme of pirates. Pupils' positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy are well promoted, for example through the annual healthy living day. Other highlights include opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn to play the violin, in Year 5, pupils play the recorder and in Year 6 some pupils play the flute. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy learning French. Spiritual and cultural development are effectively promoted through the curriculum and through the well-planned assemblies. Pupils appreciate outings to a variety of local places of interest. Residential visits to activity centres for pupils in Years 3 to 6 help self-confidence to grow.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care arrangements in the school are good. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, health and safety are robust. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will take action should any problems occur. Strong links with a wide range of outside agencies contribute well to pupils' good personal development; for example, specialist teachers provide good support for improving pupils' behaviour, social and communication skills. Support for vulnerable pupils

and their families is a strength. There are good arrangements to support pupils who may find moving up to secondary school difficult. Provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well led and managed, as the progress they make in their academic and personal development reflects. Close partnership with the neighbouring special school ensures that pupils who attend both schools on a part-time basis are well supported and achieve well. Tracking procedures enable the school to check how well pupils are doing against their targets in literacy and numeracy. However, assessment information is not used consistently to match work to all pupils' needs in order to raise standards further. In most classes, pupils have targets but these are not always used to help them to move up to the next level in their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders work well together. They have united staff as a team who share their vision for the school. For example, clear policies for behaviour ensure that staff set consistently high expectations. As a result of generally accurate self-evaluation, the school has a clear understanding of what improvements are needed. Even so, some subject leaders are not systematically involved in monitoring the quality of provision in order to bring about further improvement. In the past, the governing body has not been holding the school sufficiently to account over the standards pupils reach and the progress that they make. Governors are now working more closely with the school. They are keen to help the school to improve further although they are not playing a full part in checking the quality of the school's work. Links with the school and local community are strong. Fundraising for children in Africa and opportunities to participate in activities with pupils from other schools in this country promote community cohesion well.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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**

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kings Farm Primary School, Gravesend, DA12 5JT

Thank you for your friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. Kings Farm Primary is a satisfactory school.

These are the best things about your school.

- You told us you like coming to school and your parents confirm this.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves fit, healthy and safe.
- You get on well with each other and behave sensibly in class and around the school.
- You enjoy the opportunities you have to take on responsibility.
- You make satisfactory progress, and you could do even better.
- You have a good understanding of those who live in your local community and those who live in communities that are different from yours.
- All the adults are working hard to make sure you are well cared for and safe.
- Those of you who get additional help with your learning are well supported and do well.

We have asked the school to carry on working hard so that all the lessons are good ones by making sure that teachers plan work that is just the right level of difficulty for you. You can help by telling your teachers if you find the work too easy or too difficult. We would also like the school to make sure you know what to do to move up to the next level in your work and we have asked teachers to give you more ideas about how you can improve when they mark your work. We have also asked the school to involve all leaders and governors in checking carefully how well the school is doing.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for your help. I wish you well in the future.

Yours faithfully

Madeleine Gerard

Lead inspector