

Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121943
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327603
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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)	473
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	Brian Bennett
Headteacher	Jane Brothers
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kingsthorpe Grove Northampton NN2 6NS
Telephone number	01604 714674
Fax number	01604 710296

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average school manages a Designated Special Provision Unit accommodating 18 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The school has an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including behaviour and learning difficulties. These include a high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Twenty five per cent of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language and over half of them receive specialist support. These pupils are of Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean heritage. The school achieved a Healthy Schools award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where pupils feel safe and valued due to the good care, guidance and support. All pupils, including those in the Designated Support Provision Unit, are included in all aspects of school life. Partnerships are a strength and pupils love coming to school. 'Our teachers are great, they look after us well', said one pupil speaking for many. Parents are great fans of the school. 'This school does a lot to help us, you are made to feel as if you belong to a big family', is a typical response.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with skills that are well below those expected nationally. They make satisfactory progress but do not attain sufficiently good basic skills in writing and number due to insufficient teacher intervention in play. On entry to Year 1, attainment in personal, social and emotional development is good although standards overall remain well below average.

Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and good progress in Years 2, 5 and 6. Standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics but are average in science where achievement is good. While standards are beginning to rise, there is still room for improvement in writing and using and applying mathematics across the school. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language is good because of well-focused and targeted support. This is also why pupils from the Designated Support Provision Unit achieve well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their moral and social development, are good. Attendance is satisfactory but there are a few families who do not always send their children to school regularly. The school is working well with these parents to ensure that they see the value of education. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils think about the consequences of their actions. This enables them to be adequately prepared for their next stages in education. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep healthy and safe and they have good attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen due to the rigorous monitoring undertaken by the leadership team. What prevents teaching from being consistently good is that not all teachers are using assessments to plan tasks that will build on pupils' prior attainment. As a result, some targets set for pupils are too broad and basic skills of handwriting and spelling are not always rigorously developed. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Staff are committed to caring for pupils and the school meets statutory requirements regarding the welfare of the pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory with a good range of extra-curricular activities, although there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, well supported by her senior management team, has worked effectively at improving the quality of provision. Underachievement is being tackled successfully as can be seen in the improved results in science. The school is highly focused on improving pupils' life chances through the recent good improvements made in behaviour, achievement and improved teaching and learning. This has produced an orderly, purposeful learning environment which demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision and effectiveness of the EYFS is satisfactory. The learning environment is stimulating, welcoming and secures children's attention due to the wide range of exciting learning opportunities. Children's welfare is at the heart of provision and results in good achievement in personal, social and emotional development. Children's achievements in all other areas of learning are satisfactory but they do not attain the levels expected for their age especially in communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and number. Parents are pleased with the provision. As one mother said, 'My child is very well looked after and is developing in confidence.' The curriculum is well balanced between opportunities for learning indoors and outdoors. Teaching is satisfactory but does not always identify the next steps of learning for different ability groups. Consequently, opportunities are missed for adults to intervene in children's learning, for example by modelling correct letter and number formation. This prevents children from making better progress. Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory and staff are kept abreast of all new developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and using and applying mathematics throughout the school and ensure that more opportunities are provided for pupils to use these skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that children in the EYFS have more opportunities to develop their writing and number formation skills through structured play.
- Improve the quality of teaching especially in Years 3 and 4 to ensure that information from assessment is rigorously used to plan the next steps of learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

By the time pupils leave school, their standards are below those expected for their age but pupils' achievement through the school is satisfactory overall. Strategies to raise attainment are beginning to have a positive impact as shown in the recent rise in the percentage of higher levels in science. There is also accelerated progress being made in Years 2, 5 and 6 because of the high expectations of these teachers. More work needs to be done to raise standards and improve pupils' rates of progress, especially in the acquisition of basic skills in the EYFS, writing and using and applying mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well because of the staff's focus on the small steps these pupils make in learning. Their individual targets are worked on well in lessons and in targeted withdrawal groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite, friendly, behave well and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. As a result of consistent application of the behaviour policy, pupils are developing good knowledge of what is right and wrong and they can articulate the impact their behaviour has on others. Attendance is

satisfactory and improving but some pupils do not make it to school regularly. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, largely as a result of the good range of sports coaches they work with. They observe safe practices and know what to do should a stranger approach them. They contribute well to their local community but their awareness of the global community is only satisfactory. The school council undertakes its duties with zeal and zest and is adamant about improving the boys' toilets which, at present, are not in the best of condition. Pupils' progress in acquiring the skills needed for their future lives is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In all classes, good relationships between adults and pupils encourage pupils to develop confidence and 'have a go'. Pupils are becoming confident learners because marking is detailed and rigorous. However, in some year groups, pupils' targets are too cumbersome such as 'I must learn my 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 times tables'. This deflates some pupils' confidence as it takes too long to move on to new targets. Teachers offer good explanations, manage behaviour well and are expertly supported by both learning and behaviour mentors. The main reason why teaching is satisfactory rather than good is that it does not consistently take enough account of the next steps pupils need to develop their writing and application of number skills. Furthermore, sometimes not enough emphasis is placed on enabling pupils to acquire skills of handwriting especially for those pupils who are below average attainers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced through a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits, visitors and a residential trip for the older pupils. These all contribute to their good personal development. Curriculum planning is detailed and the curriculum is broad and balanced with good opportunities for art and design and music. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning. Some positive developments are taking place to add a more creative dimension to the curriculum, for example through linking art and design, English and drama as seen in a study of Macbeth in Year 6. The good range of homework, with which parents are pleased, is a contributory factor to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

As pupils rightly say, the school is a safe, inclusive and nurturing community where everyone is valued. The school has established effective home-school links and the introduction of parents' workshops has been successful. Pastoral care is good and pupils' emotional needs are well looked after, contributing to good attitudes and behaviour. All pupils are well cared for. Academic guidance is variable but is satisfactory overall. Some targets that are set for pupils are far too broad and pupils are unsure of them. Induction and transition arrangements for pupils are robust and parents say that their children settle into school quickly. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very secure, well established and understood by staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led by a highly dedicated headteacher who sets her sights on improving pupils' life chances and provides a clear educational direction. She is effectively supported by two assistant headteachers who are working well at raising standards, especially in Years 1 to 6. Monitoring of teaching and learning is robust and ambitious. Effective implementation of performance management holds teachers to account for pupils' rates of progress. Middle managers are taking on responsibilities but not all of them are using information from assessment to evaluate provision in their subjects. Self-evaluation is accurate but the school improvement plan requires a sharper focus so that the success of outcomes can be measured. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support all aspects of school life but not all provide sufficient levels of challenge to hold the staff to account. The school has developed good partnerships with agencies such as social care, educational psychologist and education welfare officer and this is having a positive effect on improving the quality of pastoral care. Community cohesion is satisfactory overall but good links are made with the local community.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
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	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	3
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?	2

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	2
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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsthorpe Grove Primary School, Northampton, NN2 6NS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed our visit very much and this letter is to tell you some important things we found out while we were with you:

- You go to a satisfactory school that is improving your rates of progress.
- You behave well, have good attitudes to learning and your social and moral development is good.
- You make good progress in science.
- Those of you in the EYFS achieve well in personal, social and emotional development.
- Teachers have good relationships with you.
- You do a lot of good work with the local community.
- You participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- All adults in the school make sure that you are well looked after.
- Your headteacher and staff are working very hard at helping you improve your standards in English and mathematics.

- We have asked your teachers to help you raise standards in writing and using and applying mathematics and to ensure that you can use these skills in other subjects.
- Those of you in the EYFS need to take more care when forming your numbers and letters in play activities.
- We have asked that your teachers ensure they use information from your test results to plan your next steps of learning.

You can help by being careful with your writing and using a wide range of mathematical strategies to sort out number problems. Make sure you listen to what your teachers say when they are helping you improve your work. We hope that this will help you get even higher standards. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Lead inspector