

Kingsley School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122166
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327643
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Charles Hackett

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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	115
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	Jane Boyt
Headteacher	Tom O'Dwyer
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Churchill Way Kettering NN15 5DP
Telephone number	01536 316880
Fax number	01536 415755

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of all pupils and providing them with equal opportunities to achieve
- pupils' achievement and personal development
- the effectiveness of teaching in matching work to pupils' differing needs and in providing guidance to pupils to support their learning
- the effectiveness of senior leaders and the governors in monitoring the centre's work and bringing about improvements.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff, parents and the chair of governors, as well as a scrutiny of documentation and assessment information. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kingsley School caters for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include severe and complex learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, communication and speech and language difficulties and a few with physical and medical difficulties. There are a small number of pupils in the care of the local authority and of differing ethnic backgrounds. In addition the school has a neighbourhood nursery for Early Years Foundation Stage children with a full range of abilities. Children spend a year in the nursery before moving to a nursery school.

A significant number of new teachers have joined the school in the last 18 months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kingsley is an outstanding school. 'Kingsley is a wonderful school with a caring and nurturing approach' is an example of parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. Pupils, irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress in both their learning and personal development. An extensive range of data has been collated on each pupil's performance. This has been carefully analysed to show that different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, those in the care of the local authority and of different ethnic backgrounds, all achieve very well. Excellent examples of pupils' achievements are kept and there is a very good system of annotating these to show the level of support given to each pupil. For those pupils whose progress may only be apparent in very small steps, an excellent system exists for recording this. This allows staff to record when pupils master a particular skill and then the extent that they can perform this independently and in a variety of situations.

Pupils' achievements show that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is demonstrated very clearly by the very impressive improvements pupils with complex learning needs make to enable them to mix and play with each other. Lunchtimes are a joy to observe with staff and pupils readily communicating positively with each other. Pupils without language skills select their food from options and are fully involved through signing or the use of symbols. Pupils enjoy being in school as shown by attendance records being well above the national average. 'She is upset when it's a Saturday or Sunday and she is unable to go to school' is how one parent described how his daughter had been transformed by moving to the school. Although not all pupils on the school council are able to fully articulate their thoughts on the school, they choose key words such as 'calm', 'share' and 'best friends' when asked for their views about the school. Watching a group of pupils that included those with profound and multiple learning needs responding to music during the lunchtime is just one of many examples observed of pupils thoroughly enjoying the activities on offer.

Physical activities and healthy food options ensure pupils follow healthy lifestyles. The atmosphere throughout the school is one of calmness. Behaviour is exemplary both in school and in off-site activities. This is greatly helped by the work staff do to help pupils learn to play with each other. Extensive safeguarding procedures, including detailed risk assessments and training for staff, ensure that pupils are safe in all the activities they take part in. This contributes to the excellent care, support and guidance provided for pupils. Detailed individual education plans with agreed targets form the basis for monitoring and supporting each pupil. Excellent links with other professionals, such as therapists, ensure that pupils receive very appropriate support and guidance. Pupils are encouraged to develop skills and interests that will serve them well in later life.

Central to the curriculum on offer are the pupils themselves. Although it is constantly reviewed and analysed to ensure it is being effective, the curriculum that has evolved contains a blend of experiences that address the need to develop pupils' basic skills and the aspects of the Every Child Matters agenda. Within the curriculum there are numerous opportunities to celebrate diversity and ensure equality in relation to pupils' opportunities to achieve. 'Kingsley has changed our whole family,' is an example of a comment from a parent about the impact this has had for them. The school is an integral part of the local community, and the extensive links with the church and the probation service, as well as other schools, are used well to enrich the curriculum. This level of enrichment is further developed by lunchtime and after-school clubs

and holiday events. A proposed bid to be a children's centre demonstrates the aspirations of the school to have a maximum impact on the lives of its pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning is exceptional. Teachers and support staff work very effectively as a team complementing the skills of each other. For example, when a teacher is new to the school and developing signing skills, an experienced teaching assistant would take the lead in showing these to the pupils. Meticulous planning to meet the needs of each individual is at the core of all lessons throughout the school. Established specialist strategies, such as those appropriate for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, are augmented with opportunities for these pupils to expand their social skills and address their emotional well-being. Although a number of new teachers have joined the school in the last two years this has not had an adverse impact on the school. Rather, it has given a boost to the quality of experiences within the staff team. Much of this is because of excellent recruitment, induction and support programmes that include all teachers having partners and mentors.

Self-evaluation is embedded in the life of the school and results in all aspects being constantly reviewed and the school having a very clear understanding of its effectiveness. The school has appropriate plans to further strengthen self-evaluation by comparing the progress its pupils make with those in similar schools. The headteacher has played an important part in the school being where it is today. 'The head is fantastic', is typical of the comments parents make about him. His vision for the school's development results in a constant push for excellence in all aspects of its work. He is not alone, though, in his efforts to move the school forward. All staff contribute to this through a unique process that sees all staff allocated to 'lighthouses'. These are staff groups given a remit to monitor and develop specific aspects of the school. For example, one group considers health and safety and, as with other groups, reports back with its views to the senior leadership team. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion through its excellent work within the school and local communities; awareness of global issues is also promoted very well. Governors are very involved in the work of the school. The chair and many of her colleagues are regular visitors, and frequent meetings ensure that they hold the school to account very effectively. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully and, together with the meticulous development plan, this shows that the school has an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

From their broadly average starting points Early Years Foundation Stage children make outstanding progress and are very well prepared to move from the nursery to the local infant school. The good induction systems and excellent partnerships with parents help children settle well into the nursery and ensure very good continuity between home and school. Children happily undertake a wide range of interesting activities which are very appropriate for their ability levels and needs. A focus on practical activities ensures children are provided with enjoyable and meaningful opportunities to learn. High levels of staff supervision make sure children are safe. Their behaviour is good and they clearly enjoy the company of each other. They play well together as shown by activities such as using their dumper trucks to move sand or engage in bathing their dolls. The leadership and management of the nursery are very effective. Good use of visual timetables facilitates effective communication and ensures each day runs smoothly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement plans to allow the school to compare pupils' achievements with those of pupils in similar schools.

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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	1
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	1

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

10 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsley School, Kettering, NN15 5DP

Thank you for making Clementina and me so welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a really good day for both of us. We thought the school was great, especially the headteacher. You are all very happy and we can see how well you are doing. We think your staff are excellent. They teach you very well and do everything they can to support you. Staff treat you all as very special and try to make sure everything they do for you is just right for you. There are excellent activities for all of you to join in. The headteacher and the governors work very hard to keep your school doing the best it can to help you all. The only improvement we have suggested is that staff introduce a system to compare how well you do with other boys and girls in similar schools.

Keep working hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Charles Hackett Lead inspector