

Knypersley First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124060
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328039
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	343
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	Jackie Shelley
Headteacher	Leon James Scragg
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Newpool Road Knypersley Stoke-on-Trent ST8 6NN
Telephone number	01782 297900
Fax number	01782 297901

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most found in the primary sector. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and the percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery that provides morning and afternoon sessions and two Reception classes. An external provider offers before- and after-school child care and additional early years provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This popular school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has strengths in the good quality pastoral care and support it offers and pupils' personal qualities are developed well. Pupils' smiling faces and enthusiasm for learning are testament to their exceptional enjoyment of school. They are very eager and happy learners. Levels of attendance are above average. Pupils are well behaved, polite and friendly. As a display in the school hall accurately states, 'All pupils lend a hand to make Knypersley a friendly place.'

As a result of well-managed provision, children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress and learn and develop well. This continues through Years 1 and 2 but slows in the last two years of the school. Because not all pupils make consistently good progress, achievement is satisfactory overall. By the time pupils leave school in Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are at the expected levels. Boys do not always do as well as girls. The school has introduced a number of helpful strategies to address this which are beginning to have an effect, such as themes and topics that are more interesting for boys. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although the majority of lessons are effective in ensuring that pupils learn quickly, there is not enough good teaching to guarantee that all pupils make rapid progress. At times, teachers' expectations are not high enough and more could be done to ensure that pupils are given work that is appropriate to their abilities and levels of understanding.

The school's good curriculum is enhanced very well by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. These are popular with the pupils and well attended. The large number of sporting activities contribute successfully to pupils being active, as do the regular swimming lessons in the school swimming pool. Consequently, along with their healthy eating, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of following healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is reflected in pupils' good relationships with each other and the staff. Cultural development is not as strong as the other elements because pupils have a limited understanding of the cultures, beliefs and religions found in today's society.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Although the leadership of the school is successful in promoting pupils' personal development and well-being, there is still work to be done to ensure that all pupils make good progress all of the time. Senior staff are clear about what they need to do and a number of good initiatives have been put in place to start this process. Data on pupils' achievement are well organised so that dips in progress can be identified and dealt with more quickly. Teachers are being held more accountable for the progress of their pupils.

Parents are very supportive of the school and the school has forged strong partnerships with them. They hold the school in high regard, typically saying things like, 'Once my child gets to school, they never want to leave' and, 'I take comfort in knowing that my child is well looked after.' Comments such as these capture the main strengths of this happy school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many parents commented positively on the Early Years Foundation Stage provision and they are accurate in their views. Children begin school with attainment that is lower than that normally

expected for their age. Aspects of their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills are often very weak. The children make good progress because of the well-planned and delivered curriculum provided by all the adults who work with them. By the start of Year 1, children reach broadly average standards, although their literacy and numeracy skills are still below average. Children make particularly good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills, which provides a good foundation for their development in the main school. They have positive attitudes to learning.

Very good attention is paid to the children's welfare. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is safe, secure and well equipped. Risk assessments are made regularly and great care is taken to ensure that all aspects of the provision are fit for purpose. For example, a porridge-making activity was expertly managed, with rigorous attention paid to safety. Activities are well organised to ensure that ongoing themes are integrated well and important skills are developed. Within this context, children successfully develop independence and an understanding of responsibility. Good attention is paid by staff to the children's progress across activities so that they learn and develop well. Partnerships with parents are good and well established. They are kept well informed about their children's progress and have good opportunities to take part in musical development and early reading workshops, and join theme days when they come into school and work alongside their children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is successful because it is well led and managed. Staff have high expectations and this is reflected in the good progress the children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 by raising teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve and ensure that pupils are provided with work that matches their abilities.
- Close the gap between boys' and girls' achievement even further.
- Improve the pupils' understanding of the different faiths, cultures and beliefs found in modern British society and the wider world.

A small proportion of the 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

The progress of pupils as they move through the school is not consistent. Although many pupils make good progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2, this is not always the case in the remaining years because work does not always provide the right level of challenge for pupils. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics and they remain at this level when the pupils leave in Year 4. At times, there are significant differences between the progress and attainment of boys and girls. Successful initiatives particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 are beginning to address this. However, it still remains as a problem, particularly in the older years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress that is comparable with that of their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There is a delightful happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they cooperate well. They listen carefully to each other and the adults who work with them. This was observed in assembly when all pupils listened intently to an officer from the Salvation Army, who provided an interesting alternative version to a well-known Bible story. Pupils are friendly and thoughtful and take responsibility willingly, making a good contribution to the school community. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and develop a strong awareness of the dangers they may face in their everyday lives. They appreciate the discussions they take part in about relationships and bullying. With their steady progress in developing basic skills and confidence and maturity, the pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching, which is satisfactory overall, has positive features in all classes. The strong relationships contribute well to the pupils' very good enjoyment of school. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to introduce activities and hold pupils' attention. Teaching assistants often work well with small groups of pupils and individuals to ensure they make the same progress as their peers. Although teachers are aware of the need to provide challenge for the wide range of abilities in each class, practice is not consistent and work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially as they get older. When this happens, pupils' learning slows because lower attaining pupils find work too hard while higher attainers find activities too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has been successful in strengthening the natural links that occur between different subjects. This has made learning more enjoyable and relevant, especially for the boys, and is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress they make. More opportunities are now provided to develop important literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. A very strong feature of the school's curriculum is the additional activities that are provided for pupils. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and there is a wide range of sporting and non-sporting clubs. Educational visits and visitors to school successfully make learning enjoyable and fun. Activities such as these contribute effectively to the pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

At the time of the inspection, the school fulfilled safeguarding requirements. Good links with outside agencies effectively support pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school's health education programme. The pastoral care provided for pupils is of good quality and is one of the main reasons pupils feel safe and secure at school and part of a happy 'family'. In the main, pupils receive good academic support and guidance. Pupils talk with confidence about their personal academic targets and the good help they get to achieve these.

Marking is always supportive and pupils have a secure understanding about whether they have achieved lesson intentions. In a number of instances, good advice is offered to pupils on how to improve their work, although this important aspect of teachers' marking is, at times, inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory overall. Senior managers and governors are rightly proud of the welfare, guidance and support offered to pupils which enables them to develop good personal qualities. Good work has been undertaken to improve the curriculum, which has successfully improved pupils' enjoyment of school. However, pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 is not as rapid as in other parts of the school and this is an important shortcoming. Targets for these year groups are not challenging and expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. The use of performance data has been strengthened but there are not enough meetings between senior staff and teachers to ensure that any potential underachievement can be tackled rapidly. Both the governors and senior leaders have a clear understanding of what is going well and what needs improving, but the slower progress in Years 3 and 4 has not been addressed quickly enough. Despite the school's many improvements over the recent past such as the curriculum, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. An effective start has been made to the school's contribution to community cohesion and there is an appropriate strategy in place to reach out to communities.

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
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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	3

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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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?	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?	3
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knypersley First School, Knypersley ST8 6NN

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when we visited your school recently. You were very polite and well behaved. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory education, which means that it has a number of good things and also areas to improve. This letter is to let you know about some of the things we found out about your school.

You get off to a super start in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is continued in Years 1 and 2. Progress slows a bit in Years 3 and 4 so we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to speed up learning in this part of the school by making sure that you all get work that is not too easy or too hard. Your progress is satisfactory overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average when you leave. The girls often do better than the boys so we have asked the school to look at this as well. There are lots of interesting clubs, visits and visitors which help make lessons more interesting and exciting. It is clear that you really enjoy school. You are so lucky to have your own swimming pool. You know lots about eating healthily and looking after yourselves. You are also good at taking on responsibilities and working together sensibly in groups. You do not know so much about children from other communities and the kinds of things they believe in that are different to you. As one last thing, we have asked the school to provide you with more opportunities to learn about people from other backgrounds.

The headteacher, staff and governors are all keen that the school should continue to improve. You can help by continuing to work hard and being so wonderfully enthusiastic about school.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Chris Kessell

Lead inspector