

Kingsthorne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103368
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336067
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare provision, 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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Smith
Headteacher	Joyce Ludlow
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
School address	Cranbourne Road Kingstanding Birmingham
Telephone number	0121 675 3897
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Age group	2–11
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Inspection number	336067

Registered childcare provision	Kingsthorne Day Care
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	25
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and some parents. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' records and test results and scrutinised pupils' work from the current and previous academic year. Twenty nine parental questionnaires were analysed along with 14 staff and 99 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the recent improvements in assessment and teaching are ensuring that the needs of all pupils are being met in lessons
- the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils and the arrangements for safeguarding
- the capacity of leaders at the school to bring about sustained improvement.

Information about the school

This above average sized school that serves the area of Kingstanding, to the north of Birmingham City centre. The school is located in an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are White British, with a small but increasing proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number are identified as learning English as an additional language and a few are at the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. There are slightly more boys than girls. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little higher than the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is around average. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a pre-school class, Nursery and two Reception classes.

At its last inspection the school was given a notice to improve because it required significant improvement in relation to provision and pupils' achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is a satisfactory school with some good features. The school has taken all the necessary steps to address successfully the three areas for improvement highlighted in the previous report.

The headteacher and the whole staff have responded very positively to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report and have set about improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses well because their self-evaluation procedures are sound. Although there is still further work to be done the quality of teaching has improved because of the improved use of assessment. As a consequence learning and progress are satisfactory and improving rapidly across the school. This, along with improvements to the provision in the Early Years Foundations Stage, demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement. A very supportive ethos underpins the work of the school and ensures that pupils' individual care and development are given a very high priority. Parents appreciate the good care provided and the approachability of staff.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in most areas of learning. At the time of the previous inspection standards were too low and pupils were making inadequate progress between Years 1 and 6. Progress in each year group has improved and attainment is rising because of better assessment and the close tracking of progress. Any underperforming pupils are identified quickly and their needs are catered for through targeted teaching, extra support and effective intervention programmes. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the current Year 6 is close to average. However, not enough pupils are reaching the higher National Curriculum levels and the more able pupils could achieve more, particularly in mathematics. Standards of writing throughout the school lag behind standards in reading, particularly for boys.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but not yet consistently strong enough to close the gap between pupils' present standards and those that they are capable of. Where teaching is most effective planning is thorough; learning activities meet the full range of ability needs and consequently pupils have just the right amount of challenge and learning proceeds at a faster pace. This is particularly the case where the planned activities involve practical work or information and communication technology (ICT) which motivates and engages all pupils. However, in some lessons assessment information is not used sufficiently well to ensure that tasks are finely tailored to meet the full range of abilities. Consequently the pace of learning slows, particularly for some

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boys who when tasks are not practical, or the teacher's explanations are too long, lose interest. On other occasions, particularly in mathematics, there is not enough challenge for the most able pupils to ensure that they reach high standards.

Plans for improvement are now good and arrangements for checking on their impact have been robust and honest. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been particularly effective in leading improvements to teaching and are holding teachers to account for the progress of pupils. Although relationships and the engagement with parents are good some parents state that they would like more information about how to help their children, especially in annual reports. While work with parents is helping to reduce absence, rates of attendance remain well below average.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in writing, particularly for boys, and in mathematics for the most able pupils so that more pupils reach higher levels in national tests and assessments.
- Improve the quality of teaching to good across Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - improving the engagement of boys in all lessons
 - maximising opportunities for practical work and the use of ICT to motivate all pupils
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure that there is greater challenge for the most able pupils.
- Build on the existing good relationships with parents and carers to increase their involvement in their children's education and to improve attendance by:
 - improving annual reports to identify more clearly pupils' levels of attainment, progress and where further work is needed
 - making parents aware of the link between attendance and the progress made by pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Observations show that pupils' learning and progress in the majority of lessons are now satisfactory and there is a growing core of lessons where learning is consistently good. Consequently attainment across the school is rising. At the time of the last inspection pupils' progress was inconsistent across the school and inadequate overall. Although learning and progress are now much improved the Year 6 test results in 2009 remained well below average. The proportions of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 was an increase on the previous year. For this group of pupils their progress over their final year was good, but not quite good enough to catch up with their peers nationally. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment in writing lags behind reading, particularly

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for boys, and not enough of the most able pupils are reaching the higher Level 5, particularly in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and support is planned effectively so that most are making at least satisfactory progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are generally making good progress because they receive good support. Support for looked after pupils is generally good and this group of pupils makes at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have a problem. They show a good understanding of how to stay safe. They know, for example, the need to take care on busy roads. Pupils know that exercise contributes to a healthy lifestyle and that certain foods are beneficial but pupils are at the early stages of applying this knowledge to their lifestyles. School councillors are enthusiastic about their role and older pupils enjoy helping younger children with reading. However, their contribution to the wider community and their understanding of issues facing their local area are less well developed. While pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory there are strengths in their social and moral development. Pupils work well together and are willing to cooperate with each other and many are able to identify the consequences of their actions on others. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and is often good around the school, particularly in assemblies, the dining room and playgrounds. However, in a small number of lessons, some pupils do not show consistently good attitudes to their work, particularly some boys. Although attendance is low it is rapidly improving and pupils say that they enjoy school. Pupils' good social skills and improving attainment in basic academic skills mean that pupils are appropriately prepared for their secondary education and their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships and clear expectations ensure that classrooms are calm and orderly. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning by providing extra help to those in need of additional support. Improved use of assessment to support learning is driving up the standard of teaching. Teachers' planning and marking are becoming more consistent. In the observed lessons teachers routinely shared learning objectives with pupils and this helped them to understand what was expected. Where teaching is most effective tasks are planned to meet all levels of ability and interest, although this was not always the case for more able pupils, particularly in mathematics. In some cases tasks failed to interest and engage boys and on some occasions pupils spent too much time listening to their teachers and not enough time working.

The curriculum is satisfactory but improving. For example, the introduction of daily guided reading sessions and more careful planning of opportunities for pupils to practise reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects is helping to raise standards. A suitable range of out-of-school clubs and visitors provide enrichment to the curriculum. The breakfast club is valued by both pupils and parents and helps pupils to get a good start to their school day. Parents and pupils appreciate the good levels of care, typified by one pupil's comment; 'We feel very safe, we can go to anybody and get help.' There are striking examples of effective support and guidance provided for vulnerable pupils and their parents. Pupils with additional needs are identified early and timely strategies are put in place to meet them. Care for children in the pre-school is good, with secure boundaries, careful checks on adult visitors and sufficient adults to attend to their needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher and senior leaders have a good awareness of the school's relative strengths and areas for improvement; plans are detailed and a thorough programme of checking the work of the school is now in place and is having an impact on teaching, learning and progress. The work of phase leaders is developing well; they are taking a lead role in tracking the attainment of pupils. The governors are committed to supporting the school and have had training to help them to develop their role, so they can provide more effective challenge. Safeguarding is good overall. School leaders, including the chair of governors, are trained in safe recruitment and systems for checking staff and to ensure that the pupils are kept safe are good. The child protection policy and procedures are effective and all staff have been appropriately trained. Work with external agencies is very effective. Records show that any racism or bullying has been effectively addressed.

Parents are supportive of the school and value the approachability of the staff. Many parents talked positively about the very good help and personal support they have received from the school, for example, by improving their children's attitudes to school and learning. Although there are some good systems in place to keep parents informed of their children's attainment and progress, annual reports do not always identify pupils' attainment, progress or areas where improvement is needed. Links are not made between pupils' attendance rates and their attainment and progress. Partnerships are good. Of note is the work with other agencies and the local authority to tackle underachievement. The school's policies and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity are satisfactory; consequently, all pupils are fully included in the life of the school and feel safe. The school leaders know the local community very well and have plans in place to provide a greater range of information about world faiths and other countries. The extent to which this work has been formally evaluated is as yet at an early stage.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children are good because provision is good throughout this phase. Children make good progress from low starting points. The pre-school class meets all of its registration requirements. The pre-school, Nursery and the Reception classes offer colourful and welcoming environments which provide a good start for children. All adults take good care of children. Staff use assessment well to check on children's learning to decide what work they need to do next; often involving well planned small steps to develop children's writing and counting skills. This, together with a good programme for learning how letters links with sounds, means that children make good progress in developing their basic skills. Teaching and relationships are good. Good provision ensures that there are interesting activities which nurture children's curiosity and involvement. Teachers are mindful of children's interests and build activities around these. For example, children in a Reception class showed an interest in dinosaurs this was extended across all areas of learning. During the inspection, they counted dinosaur footprints, made print impression in clay and used a dinosaur landscape as a stimulus for writing. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Staff have a very clear understanding of where improvements are needed and they all show a strong commitment to continually improving provision. For example, the recent improvements to the outdoor provision in the Nursery are to be extended to support and consolidate learning in the Reception classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspectors received a low number of parental questionnaires, some of which contained additional comments. Several parents collecting children from school spoke to inspectors during the inspection. They regard the school as caring and supportive and describe the staff as approachable. Most parents who responded to the questionnaires are positive about the school although a minority indicated that they were not happy with their child's experience at the school and a minority expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. The inspection concluded that behaviour is satisfactory overall and

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was often good in the playground and around the school. Parents should be reassured that where any inappropriate behaviour was observed it was quickly checked by staff. A small number of parents indicated that they would welcome even more information about how to help their children. Inspectors agree that there is scope for annual reports to be improved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingsthorne Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 303 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	48	13	45	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	41	17	59	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	52	12	41	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	38	13	45	3	10	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	12	41	12	41	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	45	14	48	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	34	15	52	2	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	24	19	66	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	34	15	52	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	21	13	45	3	10	3	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	24	17	59	2	7	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	6	21	15	52	2	7	2	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	37	7	37	4	21	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsthorne Primary School, Birmingham, B44 0BX

Thank you all very much for welcoming my colleagues and me to your school when we came to inspect it. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us about your school and your work. We listened carefully to what you said and to the views of your parents and carers. I want to tell you what we found out.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. It has improved since a year ago when inspectors visited and found there were several weaknesses.

Your school does some things well. The staff are very caring and make sure that you feel safe and the youngest children get a good start to their education. Teaching is getting better. Members of your school council are keen to work hard to make the school better.

To improve your school, I have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- raise attainment in writing, particularly for the boys, and in mathematics, particularly for the most able children
- make more of your lessons good by making sure that the teachers always use what they know about how well you are doing to plan lessons that are interesting and have just the right level of difficulty and challenge for everyone
- build on the good relationships with your parents and carers to make help them become more involved in your education and improve attendance.

I am sure that you would like to play your part too by attending school regularly. You can also help your teachers by letting them know if you find the work too easy or too hard. Thank you for welcoming us to your school and I wish you all the best for the future, particularly those of you who are going to be singing at the National Exhibition Centre soon.

Yours sincerely

Mr Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector

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