

Kingsway Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117317
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338990
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shamini Grayson
Headteacher	Caroline Tristram-Walmsley
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed seven teachers and a session taught by a higher level teaching assistant. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school development planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from staff and 48 parents and carers.

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

- any variation in progress between boys and girls, pupils from different backgrounds or those who join the school partway through Key Stage 1
- the impact of measures taken by school leaders and governors to improve provision and outcomes for pupils, including action taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

There are more boys than girls in this small school. Most pupils are White British, with around 15% coming from various different minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is average, and has risen this year. An average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A growing number of pupils join and leave the school partway through Key Stage 1. The school has an Activemark award. The headteacher was appointed in December 2008, having been the acting headteacher earlier in the term and deputy headteacher before that.

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

2

Main findings

Kingsway Infants' provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The children in the Reception Year get off to a good start and attain standards that exceed those expected for their ages. Pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than better, however, because it has been uneven in Years 1 and 2. This has led to variation in standards. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in 2009, it is not as high for the current Year 2. In part, this is because of the high pupil mobility. A number of the pupils who join the school partway through Years 1 and 2 come in with significantly lower attainment than those who went through the Reception Year and some are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. They benefit from good support that helps them to quickly settle into school and to narrow the gap with their peers, but their results have nonetheless had an impact on attainment overall. Attainment is also lower this year because some of the Year 2 pupils made insufficient progress when they were in Year 1.

Thorough monitoring by the headteacher and leadership team have identified incidents of underachievement and have been rigorous in taking action to improve the effectiveness of teaching and to move pupils' learning on at a faster rate. Such action, and success in working with parents and carers and the education welfare service to significantly raise attendance rates, show the school's good capacity for continued improvement. As with those boys and girls joining the school during the course of the year, well-targeted support has helped pupils to catch up where they have previously fallen behind. One-to-one tuition has been particularly effective at boosting learning. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the care and support provided has enabled them to make good progress towards meeting their individual targets. When they are working individually or in small groups, these pupils are especially well supported by teaching assistants and the other adults who help in class. However, support staff are not always fully utilised during the time, usually at the start of a lesson, when the teacher is talking to the whole class. Sometimes, too, these lesson introductions go on for too long, with the result that some pupils begin to get a little fidgety.

Despite this, a notable feature of Kingsway Infants' is the school's success in motivating and enthusing the pupils. This is because the school lives up to its motto as a place 'where learning is fun.' Links between subjects help to bring the curriculum to life, so that, for example, pupils in Year 2 reinforced what they had learnt about living things in science as they prepared for art activities involving sketching non-living objects and those, such as shells, that had once been living organisms. Pupils listen well in lessons, behave well and mostly work with sustained effort and concentration. They readily seize

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on the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility, so that, for example, school councillors chair a weekly discussion in assembly that invites pupils throughout the school to express their views on a variety of issues. This, in turn, helps to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem, as well as developing their speaking and listening skills. During the inspection, the whole school debated the importance of a healthy diet, a topic on which even the youngest children demonstrate good knowledge. Pupils are actively involved in assessing risks for activities and, as a result, their understanding of how to keep safe is especially impressive. Coupled with the comprehensive systems for ensuring pupils' protection and well-being, this is what stands out about Kingsway Infants' safeguarding procedures.

Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is satisfactory because inconsistencies remain. Teachers mostly tell pupils what they should be learning and involve them in agreeing appropriate success criteria against which they can measure whether they have achieved the learning objective. However, the learning objectives are not always as sharply focused as they could be and pupils often forget what they should be learning or what the success criteria are because they are not reminded of them while they are working. Similarly, not enough use is made of the individual targets that pupils have. Teachers know how well each child is doing, but they do not always match work carefully enough to the wide range of abilities in each class. This means that lower attaining pupils sometimes have work that is too difficult for them, while more able pupils have work that does not challenge them enough. The guidance given to pupils through marking also varies in quality. Although there is some high quality marking, particularly of writing, that gives pupils very clear guidance on how to improve their work, other marking is more erratic.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the start of the spring term 2011, accelerate pupils' progress in lessons by ensuring that:
 - in all lessons, the objectives and success criteria are sharply focused on what pupils are expected to learn and that pupils are reminded of them while they are working
 - lesson introductions are succinct
 - activities in all lessons are closely matched to pupils' different capabilities
 - teaching assistants are fully utilised during whole-class teaching
- By the start of the autumn term 2010, ensure that all pupils know and routinely refer to their individual targets and have clear guidance through marking of written work in all subjects that shows them what they need to do to improve.
- 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.

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Attainment at the end of Year 2 is currently broadly average. This represents a dip in relation to the above average standards in 2009 but it nevertheless amounts to satisfactory achievement in relation to the boys' and girls' different starting points. For many of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress is good because of the well-focused support that they are given. Those who slipped behind when they were in Year 1 have been helped to catch up, and they have developed the same good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning that is a characteristic of pupils throughout the school. Amusing displays around the building celebrate 'the Kingsway Infants' smile', and this is certainly a school where happy faces abound. This is a strength much appreciated by parents and carers. As one commented, 'My child loves school and is developing in confidence and ability. I feel the school supports her needs very well.' Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together; a feature of the school that is also noted by parents and carers who say, 'The children seem to care for one another and have good friendships across the years.' Another parent commented of her daughter: 'She feels safe, well cared for and is very resilient and self-confident.' Pupils respond to their teachers' encouragement to express their views and, though they are unfailingly polite, they are not shy about speaking up and voicing their opinions, including on matters relating to safety. For example, on the reasons why people smoke and the risks that smokers pose to themselves and others.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	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 of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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How effective is the provision?

Teachers and the other adults in the school know the pupils well. They keep a careful track of how well they are doing, and leaders ensure that tailored support is given to boost the progress of those who need extra help. The support given to those who join the school partway through Key Stage 1 has been instrumental in enabling these pupils to quickly settle in to Kingsway Infants' orderly routines. Initiatives, such as one-to-one sessions, have accelerated pupils' progress. Revised school's systems have also had a significant impact in improving attendance. Absence rates, which were previously high, are now sharply down, so that attendance has this term nudged above the level usually seen in other infant schools.

Teachers manage their classes well so that pupils are encouraged to listen carefully, both to the adults in class and to each other. When pupils are asked to listen for too long, however, this slows the pace of learning. Pupils are well motivated and eager to learn because they like their teachers and are keen to please them, but also because the curriculum is made interesting and exciting. The links between different subjects helps to make learning fun. Children learn Spanish throughout the school, even in the Reception Year, and it adds an extra frisson to the children's learning as they excitedly build on their growing numeracy skills to confidently count from uno to diez. Pupils all have individual targets but they are not all aware of what their targets are because they are not routinely reminded to refer to them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The monitoring of lessons and of pupils' learning carried out by the headteacher and leadership team is based on high expectations of what the pupils should be achieving. Firm action taken by leaders to tackle underachievement and weaknesses identified in teaching have had a measurable impact in driving forward improvements. This is recognised by parents and carers. As one explained, 'The headteacher is developing new initiatives and the children are benefiting enormously.' Governors are supportive of the school and share leaders' ambitious vision for moving the school forward, although many are new and so are only beginning to develop their roles. They have ensured, with

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the headteacher and staff, high quality arrangements for ensuring pupils' safeguarding. Systems are extremely thorough and fully meet government requirements. They are exceptional because they have resulted in pupils developing an acute awareness of issues relating to their own safety and that of those around them. The school's good promotion of equal opportunities is evident in the effectiveness of initiatives to help pupils who are behind others to narrow the gap, whether due to their language difficulties, special educational needs or low attainment in previous years. Pupils' role as 'Eco Champions' gives them a keen interest in the environment and the wider community. They have met, for example, with local authority planning staff to discuss the development of their local park. 'One World Week' helps to broaden pupils' horizons in learning about other cultures and ways of life elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in the wider world, and the pupils regularly raise funds for a range of national and international relief charities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children clearly enjoy coming to school. They feel very safe and at ease, and good induction procedures ensure they settle quickly to class routines. Groups of children are carefully organised and allocated key workers, who support and guide them. School assessment data shows that most children start in the Reception Year with skills broadly as expected of four-year-olds. Children make good progress because teaching is consistently good and well focused on meeting their needs. A warm and welcoming environment stimulates children to learn and make progress. As a result, most children

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exceed the levels expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis placed by adults on fostering good relationships.

Children's language skills improve rapidly because of the skilfully taught programme of learning letter and sounds. Following one such session with children working on spelling tricky words, some managed to write the word 'scrunch' by readily applying the sounds they had learnt. Early counting skills are promoted imaginatively. A group of children working with skittles and counting how many had fallen and how many they had left showed good numeracy skills. Activities are well planned and very well resourced, so that all children have opportunities to explore and develop their independence. In this well run provision, good use is made of the recently improved outdoor area to provide children with an appropriate range of activities that enable them to work safely, and to learn to share and take turns. Leaders have identified plans to further develop the outdoor area and to extend its use.

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

Parents and carers who completed questionnaires express mostly positive views about the school. A number wrote to commend the improvements they have noted over the past year. Although the large majority are happy with the information that the school provides for them, a significant minority would like more information about how well their child is doing and how they can help them learn at home. Inspectors saw examples of good information to parents and carers, including the sharing with them each term of their children's targets. Inspectors agree, however, that it would help parents and carers to better support children's learning at home if they had periodic updates on how well their child was progressing towards achieving their targets.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingsway Infants' 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	60	18	38	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	60	17	35	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	38	19	40	8	17	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	46	20	42	5	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	48	20	42	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	48	17	35	6	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	52	21	44	1	2	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)	17	35	23	48	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	40	22	46	5	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	42	22	46	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	46	16	33	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	46	20	42	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	44	21	44	3	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsway Infants' School, Watford, WD25 0ES

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we came to visit your school. We saw 'the Kingsway Infants' smile' everywhere we looked! We were pleased to see such good behaviour and how well you all get on together. This all helps to make Kingsway Infants' a happy, friendly place to be. We were especially impressed by how much you know about how to keep safe and by the thorough arrangements the school has to keep you safe. Staff look after you well and your teachers live up to the school motto of 'making learning fun' by giving you lots of interesting activities. You especially enjoy the opportunity to learn Spanish.

The children in the Reception Year get off to a good start. Progress over Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory rather than good because there are some things about your lessons which are not consistent enough. Even when you have clear learning objectives and success criteria at the start of lessons, you sometimes forget what these are. We have suggested that teachers remind you of these while you are working. We would also like to see you make more use of your individual targets. You can help with this by looking at your targets when you are working and doing your best to achieve them. You can also help to make your work better by carefully reading and following the advice we have asked teachers to give you every time they mark your work.

We have asked teachers to make sure that you do not have to listen for too long before you are able to get on with your independent and group work. Teaching assistants and other helpers give you good support when you are working individually and in groups, and we would like to see them using their time just as well when the whole class is listening to the teacher.

Thank you again for making our visit so memorable, and our very best wishes for the future. Adios.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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