

St Katharine's Knockholt C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118713
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313058
Inspection dates	4 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	129

Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Miller
Headteacher	Miss S-J Tormey
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Main Road Knockholt Sevenoaks Kent TN14 7LW
Telephone number	01959 532237
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How consistently teachers use tracking data and assessment data to plan to meet the needs of all pupils.
- How effective the systems are to monitor and guide pupils academically and how aware pupils are of what they need to do to improve.
- What the impact of leaders and managers is on achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of the school's data on the progress of pupils and from the school's self-evaluation, looking at pupils' work and the observation of lessons. Discussions took place with the headteacher and other leaders and managers, as well as with governors and pupils. The parent questionnaires were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector 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

This is a smaller than average village primary school with a very stable pupil population. Children enter with ability levels that are above those typical for their age. The great majority of pupils are White British and very few claim free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is lower than average. The majority of those who do so have speech, language and communication needs. The school has the Bronze Eco Award and recently achieved the Activemark and Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Some aspects of the school are outstanding, such as the way pupils are cared for and how their personal development and well-being are nurtured. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and benefit greatly from the wealth of extra clubs and experiences available to them. Parents express overwhelmingly positive views of the school, reflected many times in comments, such as 'I cannot praise the school enough' and 'This is a very happy school with a good family ethos'. In addition to the excellent links established with parents, pupils benefit from the very strong role played within the local cluster of schools through information and communication technology (ICT) and sport, and sharing expertise in relation to pupils with learning difficulties. The school makes very good use of specialist outside agencies to help with specific needs.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Consequently, the majority exceed the early learning goals set for them by the time they reach Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 so that standards are well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Writing is a particular strength in the school, with boys' writing consistently bucking the national trend. Even the younger pupils produce thoughtful and beautifully presented pieces, for example about mummy butterflies writing to their unseen babies from heaven. A recent focus on mathematics, aided by the teaching of literacy and numeracy in small groups each day, has seen a further improvement in the results in mathematics at the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above national averages and pupils make good progress. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets set for them in English, mathematics and science. The school regularly exceeds, by a substantial margin, the national averages for the proportions of pupils gaining the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6. Although few in number, pupils who have a learning difficulty are well supported and, as a result, they make good progress.

Teaching is good throughout the school, with some outstanding elements. Particularly strong areas are the relationships and the way some lessons have a 'fun' element and liveliness that help pupils to focus as they enjoy their learning so much. However, marking is inconsistent as some books have too few helpful comments that enable pupils to know how to improve their work. In addition, the impact and use of pupil targets is not as well developed in some classes as it is in others. Although pupils know and understand their targets, and in some classes the use of targets has been refined to a great extent, this practice has not been embedded throughout the school.

The good curriculum ensures that key skills are developed well. This enables pupils to be well placed to take the next steps in their lives. The school is currently reviewing the curriculum to take account of proposed changes to class groupings. In addition, whilst the curriculum is already very creative, there is a recognition that music and art could be strengthened even further. The great strength of the curriculum is the enrichment that pupils enjoy through an extremely wide range of visits, visitors and clubs, ranging from the philosophers' club to gardening, with lots of sports activities in between. The great many opportunities to stay fit offered by the clubs and the emphasis on healthy eating, as well as the very good use made of

the school's swimming pool, ensure that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy.

An outstanding element of the school is the way pupils are cared for and nurtured so that they grow in confidence. Many parents wrote of how their otherwise quiet child flourished at this school. This is not only due to the small size and the well-established staff knowing the pupils so well but also down to how exceptionally well older pupils relate to younger ones. The term 'one big family' was very accurately used by several pupils and it is something the visitor senses immediately. Pupils sit in mixed age family groups at lunchtime and older pupils are often observed showing concern for the welfare of others. This means that pupils feel extremely safe in school. They show outstandingly high levels of enjoyment too, talking about how much fun their lessons are, and this is reflected in the good attendance levels. Behaviour is exemplary, with very few issues ever reaching the headteacher's door and no exclusions. This is because there is a very consistent approach to behaviour by all adults and their high expectations are met by pupils. This has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding aided by very strong links with the church and good community links with the village.

Leadership and management is good, with outstanding leadership from the headteacher. She is held in very high regard by staff, parents, pupils and governors and has been instrumental in driving forward the good improvements seen since the last inspection, including major alterations to the premises. In this small school, staff have numerous responsibilities. Consequently, while the roles of English, mathematics, ICT and science subject leaders are fully established and impacting on standards, some of the other subject roles are still underdeveloped. Governors, through their strong committee structure, play the role of 'critical friend' well and continue to develop their skills, particularly in relation to analysing data. The school has maintained high standards for a number of years yet there is a continued enthusiasm to keep getting better in all areas. Its evaluation of its own work is accurate and it has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good education in the Reception class. The gradual start as Chocolate or Apricot Hedgehogs, depending on their age, follows a home visit and several pre-school visits. This ensures that, as parents confirm, they settle quickly and soon grow in confidence. Working with older pupils in the afternoon means that their personal, social and emotional development is very good. However, the school recognises that, whilst not understaffed, this larger group of mixed-age children would benefit even more from having additional teaching assistant help every afternoon, instead of on only two as at present. Children love school and are very happy to talk to visitors and show what they can do, such as writing their names. The good curriculum is suitably child-initiated and care is taken to ensure children are not exposed to a more formal curriculum too early despite the mixed-aged grouping in the afternoon. Teaching is good, with a particular strength being the calm approach taken to solving minor disputes so that children learn to respect others. A strong focus on developing children's reading and writing skills gives them a good foundation in these areas, which continue to be strong aspects throughout

the school. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, shared jointly by the two part-time teachers, are good. The school recognises that a more in-depth analysis of the wealth of assessment data gathered at this stage could be used to even greater effect when children move into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency with which marking and pupils' targets are used, to raise achievement throughout the school.
- Ensure the elements of outstanding teaching are spread throughout the school so that all pupils learn as well as they can.

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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?	2
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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



5 June 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Katharine's Knockholt C of E Primary School, Sevenoaks
TN14 7LS**

Thank you very much for giving me such a friendly welcome your school. I enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming into lessons and assembly, looking at your work and meeting some of you at lunchtime.

Here are some things that I found out during my visit to your school:

- You work hard, make good progress especially in your writing and achieve good results in your tests.
- You feel extremely happy and safe in school. This is because the adults all look after you exceptionally well and you also all look after each other like a big happy family.
- Your behaviour is excellent in classes and around the school. I was really impressed by the way you all acted so sensibly in the dining hall.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and this is helped by using the pool and all the sports clubs organised by the school. You are lucky to have so many different clubs that cater for lots of different interests.

What I have asked the school to do next:

- Make sure that all of your teachers give helpful comments when they mark your work and that they use your targets even more to help you to improve.
- Ensure that, although many of your lessons are really interesting, it makes them all like that so you learn even more.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard and to behave in the excellent way you do. Thank you for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Lindsay
Lead Inspector