

Kings Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	118585
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	379641
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	John Worgan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	328
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Mayhew
Headteacher	Paul Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Worgan

Additional inspector

Elaine Hamilton

Additional inspector

Barry Wood

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons taught by 18 teachers. They also observed a range of intervention and phonics (learning about letter sounds) sessions and listened to pupils read and looked at their work. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff and parents. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation documents and action plan, pupils' progress records and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 72 parents and careers were received and were analysed along with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Kings Farm is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The largest group of pupils is of White British heritage. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school part way through the school year. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery class and two Reception classes. A link with the nearby Special School enables 12 pupils to be taught in the Nursery; most of these pupils return to the Special School to join their Reception class. A daily breakfast club is provided. Following the retirement of the long-serving headteacher in September 2011, the school is led by the deputy headteacher as acting head.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils are making satisfactory and improving progress in their learning but achievement throughout the school is not yet consistently good. Relationships between staff and pupils are supportive, built on mutual trust. Overall effectiveness is not yet good because teaching and progress across the key stages are not consistent and improvement is not yet sustained over time.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment is below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move up the school but there are inconsistencies. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is average in mathematics but still below average in English. The school has correctly identified that writing and reading are aspects that are holding pupils back and is taking action which is leading to improvement.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is good teaching in the school, especially in the upper years, but it is not yet consistent enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Expectations are not always high enough and teachers do not always provide work which suits the needs of pupils of different abilities. The school has implemented several strategies to improve teaching in reading and mathematics which are beginning to make significant improvements.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is below average but has improved in the last year. Staff have worked very effectively with families and outside agencies to make improvements in attendance and behaviour.
- The school provides a secure, safe and inclusive learning environment and a broad and balanced curriculum that effectively promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Leaders and managers are clear about what needs to improve. Teachers' performance is monitored thoroughly and professional development focuses on the improvement of teaching in key areas.

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The use of pupil progress data at a strategic level is at an early stage, however.

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?

- Ensure pupils make good or better progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 by:
 - raising expectations so that children are challenged and supported to achieve their targets
 - enhance children's communication skills by teaching which focuses on developing language, both oral and written.
- Improve standards of teaching to be consistently at least good by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice which exists in the school so that pupils enjoy a variety of stimulating and challenging tasks
 - ensuring that work is matched to pupils' needs and abilities, particularly for the more able
 - more focused use of teaching assistants, particularly to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress.
- Ensure that leadership and management at all levels is focused on raising attainment by:
 - ensuring that data are used to track pupils' progress and especially that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to plan for the next stages of their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start at the school in the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are lower than is expected for their ages. They make good progress in personal development but progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, particularly in key areas such as communication, language and literacy, and attainment is still below average by the time they start in Year 1. Children are not always challenged by questioning to enable communication targets to be reached.

Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory and improving in some key areas. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics has steadily improved and in 2011 it was just below the national average. Results in English have also improved, but from a lower base, so they are still below the national figure. The school's data for the current Year 6 indicate that this improvement will be sustained and this judgement was confirmed by lesson observations, work scrutiny and discussion with pupils. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, in both reading and writing, is below national averages but the biggest gap by the end of Year 6 in 2011 is in writing. The school recognises the need to improve standards

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and several strategies, including 'Big Writing', systematic teaching of phonics and an emphasis on writing across the curriculum have been introduced and are beginning to show results in terms of improving pupils' progress. In lessons observed, it was clear that pupils are making better progress, although their skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation continue to hold them back in English and other subjects. More-able pupils are not yet reaching higher levels of attainment, however.

In lessons, inspectors found that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read enthusiastically. Pupils in Year 2 were developing their reading skills and were able to use letter sounds to decode some unfamiliar words. Some good phonics teaching was seen but is not fully embedded to have its most significant impact. Year 6 pupils generally read fluently but girls were more confident than boys, reading with greater expression. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make expected progress in mathematics but are below national expectations in English, although the gap between these pupils and pupils nationally is closing. The large proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and disabilities make similar progress to other pupils and they benefit from a range of support strategies. The monitoring of the progress of these pupils as individuals and groups is not sufficiently thorough to be used to gauge the effectiveness of these strategies, however. Teaching assistants are dedicated and well trained but their support is not always focused on raising pupils' attainment, especially with younger pupils. Parents and carers are generally happy with the progress of their children but inspection findings indicate it is only satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Underpinned by a sound planned curriculum, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but improving. In the more successful lessons, pupils are actively involved and work together successfully in pairs and groups; consequently they make good progress. In these lessons, teachers' good questioning skills promote learning well. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils took part in a competitive tables quiz, and then went on to plot coordinates in a quadrant, helping each other to recall correct terms and principles. In this and similar lessons, teaching has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is because pupils are fully engaged and motivated; they work together well and are able to take responsibility for their learning. In lessons where teaching is less effective, pupils spend too long listening to teachers, limiting the time for independent and group work. There is sometimes a lack of pace in these lessons and although planning identifies tasks for different groups and includes extension activities, pupils often all start at the same point and so more-able pupils do not always have the time to extend their learning.

Pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly, with careful correction of written work. The best examples of marking gave pupils clear guidance on the next steps in their learning. Examples of the use of numeracy and literacy across the curriculum were seen; for example, pupils in Year 6 had produced extended writing of good quality in history, which had been marked and corrected carefully.

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In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory with some good practice. There is good planning for all areas of learning inside and outside and an effective balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children make their own choices. However, the purpose of some activities in promoting learning was not always clear and questioning was not always used effectively in encouraging children to develop their communication skills. Sometimes expectations of what children can achieve are too low and their targets are not sufficiently challenging.

Parents and carers and pupils are positive about teaching and pupils say they learn a lot in lessons and teachers help them do as well as they can. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils, staff and the majority of parents and carers are positive about the school and its work. There are good relationships between pupils and adults that promote good attitudes to learning. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils, in their questionnaires, said they feel safe in school and are confident that teachers deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or bullying well. Racist incidents are rare and are dealt with effectively. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyberbullying, and said that bullying of any type is dealt with promptly. However, parents and carers and pupils do have some concerns about behaviour in lessons. Inspectors judge it to be satisfactory because of the support strategies the school has put in place. The work of the learning mentor and the family support worker have a positive impact in supporting pupils who have considerable behavioural needs and find it difficult to moderate their own behaviour appropriately. The 'Learning Zone' is a well-resourced and welcoming area where pupils who have difficulty in coping in normal classes receive support and help to enable them to focus on their learning. Pupils respond well to sanctions and rewards and they respect the rights and feelings of others. Staff manage behaviour well so that most pupils are orderly and conduct themselves well in most lessons and in the playground, where there is a high level of supervision. Discussions with pupils and the school's own behaviour records show that this is typical. Attendance is below average but improving because of the successful initiatives the school has introduced.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher and senior staff provide clear direction. There have been improvements over time that demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. There is a focus on raising attainment which is shared by all the staff, who have willingly embraced initiatives such as systematic phonics teaching. Since the previous inspection, there have been staffing changes which, although they have strengthened senior and middle leadership, have resulted in a mid-year change of teacher for some classes. The introduction of phase leaders has been effective, especially in monitoring pupils' progress and in adapting the curriculum and teaching to cater for gaps in learning which have been identified. School self-evaluation is accurate and informs its improvement planning well. Good examples of this are the

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successful action taken to improve writing, including professional development training for all staff. All leaders, including the governing body, know the school's strengths and weaknesses and share a clear strategy for further improvement. Recent recruitment in key areas has strengthened the governing body. Attendance, although still low in comparison to national standards, is improving and the family support worker and the attendance officer's efforts have made a significant difference to the attendance of some of the school's more persistent absentees. Regular communication, breakfast provision and the work of the family support worker are among the successful strategies to engage parents and carers in the life of the school and to support their children's learning.

School leaders and staff are committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination and pupils have a real sense of belonging, fostered by the inclusive ethos that promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. School leaders ensure that all safeguarding requirements are well established and that pupils feel safe and learn in a safe environment. There is good pastoral support for pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Academic support is less secure because analysis of data is not yet sufficiently rigorous in using the information to further accelerate the achievement of particular groups, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of pupils, although there are some weaknesses in its implementation for different ability groups. The good practice in teaching is not always shared across year groups. Art, music and information and communication technology enrich pupils' experiences, as does the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Pupils of all years benefit from visits, including a residential trip to France for Year 6 and a visit to a farm for the younger children.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

18 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Kings Farm Primary School, Gravesend DA12 5JT

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking to us about your work. You are polite and friendly and we appreciated the way you helped us find out about your school. Kings Farm is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are good and some things need to be better.

These are some of the things that stood out about your school:

- You have done very well to make some improvements in your mathematics and English.
- You and your teachers have worked hard to improve your progress, and results are improving.
- Your school is a safe place and staff care for you well and help you when you have problems or difficulties.
- You obviously enjoy coming to school because you have improved your attendance. Well done, but there is still room for more improvement!

We have asked your school to do the following things to improve.

- Help pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 by:
 - giving them support which will help them to achieve their targets
 - working with them to improve their speaking, listening and writing.
- Making teaching even better by:
 - sharing good ideas to plan lessons which are interesting, challenging and enjoyable
 - asking teaching assistants to help you by knowing your targets and helping you to achieve them.
- Ensuring that leaders and managers help you to make better progress by:
 - using assessments to track your progress to help them to plan for the next stages of your learning.

You can help the school improve by always working hard and doing your best

Yours sincerely

John Worgan
Lead inspector

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