

Kings Meadow School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122167
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380410
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Bentley

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Hamson
Headteacher	Karen Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Bentley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector sampled four hours of teaching in nine lessons taught by six teachers. All these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, a learning walk was completed. Pupils' work was examined, pupils were heard reading, and discussions were held with pupils about all aspects of school life. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, teachers and the Chair of the Governing Body. Account was taken of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector looked at a very wide range of documents, including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. The scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included a close evaluation of pupils' behaviour. The inspector analysed 15 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and considered responses to the questionnaires from 35 pupils and 18 members of staff.

Information about the school

This small special school caters for pupils who have significant behavioural, social, and emotional difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional specific learning and communication difficulties. The majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Many have experienced severe difficulties and frequent exclusions from their mainstream schools before being given a place at Kings Meadow School. There is a high turnover; pupils often join the school part way through the academic year. Although a primary school, Kings Meadow rarely receives referrals for children who are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The youngest pupils on roll are currently in Year 2. The school has numerous awards including Investors in People, Artsmark Gold, The Inclusion Quality Mark and Healthy Schools status.

The Kings Meadow 'Learning to Grow' programme provides expertise and support to mainstream schools, their pupils and families.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Kings Meadow is an outstanding school. It has continued to make considerable progress since its last inspection. This is because it is highly effective in the way it manages pupils' behaviour and successfully gets them 'back on track' enabling them to fulfil their full potential as learners.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make particularly rapid progress in English and mathematics, and in controlling their own emotions. As a result, their behaviour very quickly improves. The school swiftly identifies the gaps they have in their knowledge and precise targets are tailored to meet their learning needs in English and mathematics. Although the school is well on its way to extending this, target setting is not fully embedded in all aspects and subjects of the school's topic work.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. They feel very safe in school and are rightly proud of their greatly improved attitudes in class and around the school. The school has extremely robust and well-implemented policies and practices to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare and to manage their occasional extreme behaviours.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. All staff have extremely high expectations of all pupils' achievements. The whole school team works together to deliver a very exciting creative curriculum which all pupils thoroughly enjoy. The team work between all staff is excellent. The school's inclusive ethos provides excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The whole school is highly ambitious for its pupils. Self-evaluation is very accurate and extremely rigorous and underpins all aspects of the school's performance in order to identify areas for further improvement. Learning and progress are very well tracked and the information gained is used effectively to implement interventions for pupils. The

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leadership of teaching is characterised by very high quality performance management, training and support for all staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the school's work on extending target setting to all subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire consider that their children make good progress and would recommend the school to others. Examination of pupils' work over time and the lessons observed confirm the school's evidence that pupils are making outstanding progress across the school. This is because all the support is closely targeted to their individual learning needs in each and every lesson.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low, often as a result of disruption before they attend the school and other learning difficulties they have. Pupils are expertly supported to manage their own behaviour using a range of supportive strategies. As a result, their readiness for learning improves rapidly. The vast majority have achieved or exceeded the goals expected of them each year within their individual education plans. A good number gain skills and knowledge which are close to those of their peers nationally.

Pupils' rapid acquisition of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is because of the consistently outstanding teaching they receive over time and this ensures they make much greater progress than expected given their starting points. Pupils are very positive about reading and they use a range of well-developed strategies to sound out the words. The books they choose are very closely matched to their ability and this enables them to read fluently, thus developing their confidence. Basic skills are taught extremely well throughout their topic work, thus enabling pupils to consolidate these important skills. As a direct result, the gaps between pupils in the school and all pupils nationally are closing very quickly.

The school precisely tracks each individual pupil and analyses information about different groups of pupils such as boys, girls and those known to be eligible for free school meals. They all achieve outstandingly well because their progress is monitored so closely; any not on track to achieve their targets are given timely extra help. Pupils also make significant strides in their personal development. This is because the school is very successful at recognising their different starting points, building their self-esteem and giving them the confidence to become resilient learners and to succeed.

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Pupils' enjoyment of school and their highly successful learning is evident in all lessons. For example, a group of pupils worked together, intensively listening and responding enthusiastically to comprehension questions about the myth they were reading. The partnership that exists between teachers, the assistants and the pupils is exemplary, all staff focus on what they expect pupils to achieve and support them tirelessly in class to achieve these high expectations.

Quality of teaching

All the parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire agree they are very happy with the teaching and the way the school helps support their child's special needs. One parent wrote 'Kings Meadow is an exceptional school which offers a high level of support and education, not only to the pupils but their families as well.'

There are a great many strengths in the teaching. The classrooms are set up to be safe, secure and very exciting places for pupils to learn in. Pupils are actively encouraged to 'have a go'; the individualised teaching approach helps them in a supportive climate to develop very positive attitudes to learning. Teaching is very carefully planned to make each lesson interesting, practical and closely matched to pupils' individual learning needs, particularly in English and mathematics. This ensures gaps in knowledge are successfully closed and pupils are able to make quick gains and move forward swiftly in their learning.

During the inspection all the teaching seen catered extremely well for the differing and often diverse levels and starting points of the pupils. In the lessons where teaching is outstanding, pupils are fully challenged and learning is tailored precisely to their individual needs and is adjusted during lessons so that all pupils are challenged to make excellent progress. Marking is carried out conscientiously. Teachers and their assistants provide consistently high quality feedback in partnership with their pupils. They also expect a great deal from them. As a result, they know precisely what they need to do to improve their work and feel very good about the progress they are making. In all the lessons observed, good learning habits were displayed. Where pupils demonstrated some challenging behaviour this was managed in a highly effective manner, by resilient teachers and their assistants who have extremely high expectations of their pupils. They expertly re-integrate pupils in a timely fashion ensuring that no learning time is lost.

Teachers and the teaching assistants promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well by providing them with excellent opportunities to reflect and learn together. Different subjects are brought together in exciting topics that include excellent opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and technology skills and there are effective plans in place to make sure that target setting is extended to topic work. Pupils' work is celebrated in a wide range of high-quality displays around the school which values their achievements.

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The teaching of a technology lesson resulted in pupils independently working through a clear set of learning criteria to create their individualised presentations entitled 'good to be me'. In a physical education lesson pupils were observed having great fun; their skills were rapidly developed through carefully planned team activities that were expertly matched to pupils' skill levels.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

When pupils enter the school they very quickly learn routines and strategies to help them manage and self-regulate their behaviour. As a result, there are often excellent improvements and no pupils are excluded from school. Before their arrival several have experienced periods of disruption and many have previously had negative views of school. They are very quickly supported and encouraged to take responsibility; as a consequence they demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Their behaviours are continually tracked by all staff and records show the very positive influence of the behaviour management on reducing incidents of negative behaviours. Pupils' concentration improves rapidly. They listen carefully to staff and work very well in small groups and at their 'workstations'. All pupils spoken to said they thoroughly enjoyed school and were able to give several examples of how the school had helped them to learn how to control their anger.

Attendance is broadly average and punctuality is good. Pupils respond very well because lessons are exciting and there are a vast range of opportunities to help them improve the social aspects of learning. All pupils spoken with say they feel safe in school; and they know how to keep themselves safe from bullies. Incidences of bullying are rare. They also know how to keep safe when using the internet and from other forms of bullying. Pupils respond very well to the school's award systems and the celebration assemblies, where they share their work, focus respectfully and proudly listen to each other's successes. Assemblies are used very well to reinforce the school's behaviour codes and to prepare pupils for future life in a multi-cultural society. Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school keeps all pupils safe and many are highly positive about improvements in their child's behaviour.

Leadership and management

Improvement since the last inspection is excellent and leaders demonstrate the aspiration and drive to develop the provision further. The headteacher, other senior leaders and staff work very effectively as a whole school team. All pupils and their parents and carers are welcomed and valued. Morale is high. One staff member wrote, 'The head teacher is inspirational: she guides, nurtures and truly believes in all her pupils'.

All leaders take their roles very seriously and contribute very effectively to the school's self-evaluation and subsequent plans for improvement. All are focused on

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pupils doing their very best both in terms of learning and behaviour. Leaders monitor teaching very regularly, record clearly the focus teaching has on learning, and feedback accurately within sharp timescales. Teachers implement a successful system for sharing with the pupils how well they are doing in English and mathematics and when helping them to assess their behaviour. Targets are set and thoroughly reviewed as part of this process. These are now being fully extended to topic work and this process forms the school's priority for improvement.

The curriculum is outstanding; it provides a vast range of exciting opportunities for pupils. It fosters their interests and helps to successfully develop highly positive behaviours towards learning within exciting topics, for example the Second World War. Additional enrichment activities are integral to all that is done, to nurture a lifelong appreciation of learning and to show pupils that if they try they will succeed. As a direct result, the curriculum supports and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

The governing body is strong and is highly supportive of the work the school does. It is well aware of the school's strengths and areas yet to develop. This is because it checks and challenges different aspects of the school's performance. It ensures that all pupils are progressing rapidly from when they first start the school, once their behaviour is back 'on track'. The headteacher provides them with a wealth of excellent information which helps them to fulfil their role and hold the school fully to account. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well through the curriculum. Discrimination is taught about and well understood by pupils. Any that occurs, as result of pupils' behavioural difficulties, is immediately challenged. As a result, the school is a cohesive place to learn.

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.

26 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Kings Meadow School, Northampton, NN3 7AR

I would like to thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school recently. Thank you also for talking to me and showing me your work. You go to an outstanding school where teaching is excellent. Your school really helps you improve your behaviour and helps you learn to be the best you can be all the time. These are the best things about it.

- You thoroughly enjoy coming to school and feel happy there.
- You learn to get on with other pupils and show very positive attitudes towards learning in lessons.
- You told me that everyone in school takes very good care of you, and you feel very safe and secure.
- You very much enjoy your topic work and learning to read.
- You go on fantastic trips and have interesting visitors and activities in school.
- You look after your school and take great pride in the work of others and displays.

The headteacher and all the staff ensure that you can enjoy your work and learn about exciting things because they carefully plan your lessons and expect you to behave as well as you can all the time. I was impressed by how well, most of the time, you all show that you want to learn. The headteacher agrees that some things can be improved even more to help you to make even better progress. I have asked your teachers always to make sure you use your 'steps to success' targets in your topic work, as well as in your mathematics and English work; this is so that you know how well you are doing in the different subjects and aspects of your work.

You can help by always trying your best and by continuing to try hard with your behaviour and in all that you do.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Bentley
Lead inspector

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