

Kingsmead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134336
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	395633
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sam Rocke
Headteacher	Catriona Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
School address	Dukes Way Kingsmead Northwich CW9 8WA
Telephone number	01606 333470
Fax number	01606 333471
Email address	admin@kingsmead.cheshire.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson

Additional Inspector

Desmond Stubbs

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed sixteen lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of their work. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors also took into account 192 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and members of staff. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, which included that relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, national assessment data and the school's assessments.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils are White British in this average-sized primary school. A very small number are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. Several awards have been achieved by the school including the Eco Green Flag and Healthy School Status. The school meets the current floor standards which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Before- and after-school care is provided during term time.

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

- This is an outstanding school. Excellent leadership and management have sustained and improved teaching quality and pupils' achievement in all subjects. These improvements are underpinned by an outstanding curriculum which promotes exemplary behaviour and attitudes and is rich in opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is scope to make the organisation of the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) even more effective, including the contribution made to it by adults in the school.
- The good progress seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage, from children's broadly typical starting points, gathers momentum in Years 1 to 6. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average and well above average at the end of Year 6. This picture has been sustained since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and promotes at least good, and often rapid progress. Teachers' imaginative planning and first-class subject knowledge ensure that the vast majority lessons are lively and enjoyable and challenge pupils' skills and abilities exceptionally well.
- Pupils are highly positive in their attitudes to learning. They consistently demonstrate outstanding behaviour and relationships with others. They feel very safe in school. Their attendance is high and pupils make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, relentlessly pursue excellence in all of the school's activities. A staff member commented on the pleasure it gave to work in a school where every member constantly sought improvement. Teaching performance is led and managed exceptionally well, through a rigorous programme of monitoring and support. Incisive self-evaluation and resulting actions by leaders drive the school's capacity to sustain its quality of education. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Organise the teaching of phonics more effectively so that:
 - maximum use is made of all adults' teaching skills
 - there are better opportunities to cater for pupils according to their precise needs and further improve early progress in reading and writing.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils learn well because of their highly positive attitudes and enthusiasm in lessons. They consistently challenge themselves to do better, for example, when searching for the precise word to improve a poem or when working with partners to find answers to a history problem which calls for reflection on the spiritual and moral values of war. Their frequent use of self-assessment demonstrates their accurate insights into their own learning. They apply their knowledge and skills extremely well across a range of subjects and learn equally well in sport and arts, particularly music, as they do in English and mathematics. Pupils agree unanimously that the school helps them to do as well as they can.

There is a positive start for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter the Reception Year with broadly typical abilities for their age and move into Year 1 securely within expected levels. Their personal, social and emotional development is good. Progress in the learning of letters and sounds is good but hindered to some degree because teaching and groupings do not consistently take account of children's differing stages of progress both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and during Key Stage 1. Despite this relative area for improvement, pupils' overall rates of progress gather strength as they move through the school. They reach above expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and current assessments and pupils' work indicate well-above-average attainment at the end of Year 6, and outstanding all-round achievement.

Pupils are very enthusiastic readers, comfortable with challenging texts covering a wide range of topics and interests, including classics by authors such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens. Pupils also access electronic books, explaining that it gives them a wider choice of reading material. All pupils read at home. One claims to sleep with a dictionary under the pillow!

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress from their starting points. Their learning is very carefully tailored to their needs, based on thorough assessment. Learning targets are shared so pupils feel fully involved in their progress. Skilful support from teachers and teaching assistants encourages pupils and helps them to achieve their best. School assessments show that the attainment of pupils considered to be potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is rapidly drawing level with that of others. Their attainment in English and mathematics was above average in 2011. The pupils made better than expected progress.

Virtually all parents and carers hold the view that the school meets their children's needs and that they make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is consistently at least good with a high proportion being outstanding. This accounts for the rapid rate of progress. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, and the way they adapt the engaging curriculum to get the best from pupils, mean lessons are exciting and filled with new learning. Discussion is a major feature of every lesson. This encourages pupils to work with others, listen to others' views and at times change their own. In one lesson, pupils discussed the issue of conscientious objectors, linked to their War and Peace topic. They analysed poetry linked to the topic, discussed its form and language, and used their knowledge of the subject to compose highly impressive and moving poems.

Teachers use every opportunity to develop pupils' skills. Technology and other resources are used extremely well to help pupils focus sharply on their learning. The range and purpose behind pupils' writing are exceptional. As a result, Year 6 pupils' extensive vocabulary, including their knowledge of technical language, lifts the quality of writing to outstanding. Teachers continually check pupils' work and question them astutely to test that their learning is leading to the lesson objective. Boys and girls are equally inspired by the work of artists, the discovery of First World War artefacts, or the mathematics of probability.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational need are taught extremely well. The one-to-one support they receive is focused precisely on their particular needs. Teachers' expectations are high and these pupils achieve very well.

Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. They work very effectively alongside class teachers. Groups of pupils and individuals benefit greatly from their skilled and sensitive support. Pupils say that they learn a lot in lessons and parents and carers agree unanimously. These views are fully supported by inspection evidence.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour around the school and their attitudes in lessons are outstanding. They are invariably courteous and well mannered. They show the greatest respect for adults and each other. One pupil commented that, in the playground, '...there is a friendship stop but no-one ever needs to use it'. Pupils manage their own behaviour extremely well to suit different occasions. They enjoy the social setting of the dining room and show respect and dignity during assemblies. The school's clear expectations provide strong support for pupils' social and moral values. An excellent example of how this works is the way in which a group of over-boisterous footballers have been encouraged to channel their enthusiasm into running a lunchtime sports club for others so that a potential problem became a successful solution. Pupils' cultural awareness is very strong because of the positive way in which their local heritage and links with pupils in schools abroad are woven into the curriculum.

Pupils feel entirely safe in school. This view is shared overwhelmingly by parents and carers who agree also about the high standard of behaviour. They greatly appreciate the additional care and safety of the before- and after-school provision, which has considerable influence on punctuality and high attendance. Pupils have a clear understanding of all kinds of bullying, including those linked to internet use and text messaging. Pupils are adamant that incidents of bullying or name-calling in school are exceptionally rare. They are fully aware of potential risks outside school and know how to manage them.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the everyday life of the school. The active school council gives them a full voice in school matters. The eco-committee is also very watchful over the sustainability of resources. An 'eco-greenhouse' made from recycled plastic drinks bottles is well under construction, adding to the 'green' products of the school allotment and chicken run.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers have been highly successful in sustaining the quality of learning and driving the school towards the highest levels of achievement. Continuous self-assessment rooted in the teachers' passion for curriculum development, as well as exceptional insight and challenge from the governing body, are underlying strengths. The achievement of outstanding teaching has been a main target. To that end, the management of teachers' performance has been increasingly rigorous and successful, through a programme of lesson observations by senior leaders, professional dialogue and additional coaching when seen to be necessary. Leaders have reflected on the way the teaching of phonics is currently organised and acknowledge that more effective use could be made of the available skills of teachers and other adults in order to get early reading off to an even better start.

The governing body fulfils a crucial role in the continued development of the school. It provides excellent challenge because of the depth of its understanding about national assessment data and the pupils' attainment. The annual checking of policies and other statutory matters is planned so that nothing is left to chance. Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.

The curriculum provides outstanding learning opportunities because it is planned specifically, and enriched with the pupils in mind. It gives teachers scope for imaginative planning and the development of their passion for different subjects which has a positive impact on teaching quality, pupils' achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Noteworthy successes are the excellent achievement of the school band and the quality of singing, and the impressive displays of pupils' art work. Through the curriculum all forms of discrimination are very strongly challenged. The pastoral and academic progress of every pupil is carefully checked to ensure equality of opportunity whatever a pupil's individual talents.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



24 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kingsmead Primary School, Northwich, CW9 8WA

Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a real pleasure to talk to you because you are so polite and well mannered. We were very impressed by your attitudes to work and the extremely sensible way that you go about your daily business in school. Well done for keeping your attendance at such a high level. That is most important so do keep it up. It would be wrong of me not to mention how 'bowled over' we were by the quality of your singing and the exceptional performance of the school band. Thank you very much for that also.

I am happy to tell you that you attend an outstanding school. That is because you continually reach very good standards in English and mathematics and achieve exceptionally well in all that you do. Your lessons are full of learning and fun. You work very hard and enjoy what you do. You take care of each other extremely well and your behaviour is exemplary. Your school leaders never stop looking for ways to improve you school.

Nevertheless we have asked teachers to take the school forward an extra step by making more effective use of all the excellent skills adults have in order change the way that letters and sounds are taught, particularly for the younger pupils. This will get reading and writing off to an even better start lower down the school and be a help as you move up by enabling you to achieve those high standards even more quickly.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

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