



# Kings Meadow School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122167  
**LEA** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 281175  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 12 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Susan Morris-King HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Manning Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Moulton Leys
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 7AR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 673730
<b>Number on roll</b>	31	<b>Fax number</b>	01604 673739
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs E Last
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2002	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Lewis

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12 October 2005 - 12 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281175
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school caters for pupils who have significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational need. Many of the pupils have experienced severe difficulties at mainstream primary schools before being given a place at Kings Meadow School. There is a high turnover; pupils often join the school or leave to attend other placements part way through the academic year. The youngest pupil on roll is currently in Year 2. There are only three girls on roll.

The school experienced some instability in staffing over the last academic year. Two new teachers and several support staff joined the school in September 2005. A new headteacher took over the leadership of the school in September 2005 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. The school has an extended role in the local authority: the Learning to Grow team works with a number of families whose children are experiencing difficulties with their behaviour in their mainstream school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The effectiveness of King's Meadow School is satisfactory overall, although the school has a number of good features. The senior team agrees with this judgement. The school is a bright and cheerful environment, into which the pupils are warmly welcomed each day. The pupils are generally positive about coming to school and often enjoy their lessons, although many are greatly lacking in confidence which can affect their attitudes. The school pays good attention to ensuring that the pupils are safe and well cared for. Teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory overall, and sometimes good.

Assessment and tracking were highlighted as the key areas which needed improvement in the previous inspection report. The school has taken some effective action to tackle these issues in literacy and in social, emotional and behavioural skills. However, overall, the actions have not been sufficiently focused or wide ranging. As a result teachers do not have clear enough information to plan their lessons which impacts on the progress the pupils make. The school has well established systems for helping the pupils to manage their behaviour, but it is not always effective in preventing or managing some of the more extreme behaviour, and exclusions have risen sharply over the last academic year. Monitoring and evaluation have not been carried out rigorously or frequently enough, which has had an adverse impact on the school's ability to diagnose and put right some of these issues. The new headteacher has a very good understanding of the next steps which the school needs to take, and is well supported by the senior team and by the governing body. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 3

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- teachers are clear about what the pupils need to learn next
- pupils know what the next steps are in their learning
- any underachievement can be quickly noticed and put right. Review and update the behaviour management system so that:
- pupils are helped to manage their behaviour more effectively
- the school develops a range of appropriate alternatives to exclusion, and exclusions are used less frequently. Set up rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The pupils' standards of attainment on entry to the school are generally below or well below average. The pupils' prior attainment has been affected by their significant learning and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and sometimes by sporadic school attendance and periods of exclusion. Some of the pupils attain the nationally expected Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests by the end of Year 6, and occasionally

pupils achieve a Level 5. Once they settle at the school, most of the pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their academic work and with their social, emotional and behavioural development. Some make good progress, particularly with aspects of their behaviour and attendance, and sometimes their literacy and numeracy skills.

The procedures to track the pupils' progress and to set them new and challenging targets are not yet good enough. This affects the teachers' ability to plan in sufficient detail to meet the pupils' individual needs and the school's ability to know whether the pupils are making enough progress. The progress of some of the pupils has been hampered over the last year by their exclusion from the school on a number of occasions.

Grade: 3

### **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 3**

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, but some aspects are good. Pupils' moral and social development is a real strength of the school. Many of the staff are unrelenting in their aim to teach the pupils how to interact positively with each other and with adults. Assemblies, lessons and displays support these values, and promote spiritual and cultural awareness. As a result the pupils usually try hard to talk politely and kindly to each other and to respect each other's personal space, and they often succeed. The school teaches the pupils to be healthy and safe. Displays around the school promote a healthy lifestyle. Even young pupils, therefore, are starting to understand how to stay safe and healthy. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for the school environment, for example there are paper recycling bins in each classroom and pupils share duties to empty them. The building is immaculate and the pupils help it to stay that way. The school's behaviour management policy is rightly under review, as some of the strategies used are not responsive enough to the pupils' needs. Mostly the pupils behaved well in lessons; their behaviour was good in assembly and at lunchtimes. The pupils respond reasonably well to the system of credits and there are other rewards which they enjoy, but sometimes in lessons, opportunities are missed for praising and encouraging good choices. Exclusions over the past academic year were too high. The school is aware of the need to develop a range of strategies to minimise the use of exclusion as a sanction and has taken some initial steps to do so. Action has begun this term to improve attendance further and to address unauthorised absence. This is particularly important given the vulnerability of some of the pupils.

Grade: 3

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching in the school which is supported by good relationships between the staff and the pupils. There are some very good examples of the pupils' work on display, particularly their writing. The staff encourage the pupils to take a pride in their work, and many of the pupils respond well despite their lack of self-confidence. However, the quality of teaching has not been effectively monitored by the senior leadership team. As a consequence there are not enough common approaches to teaching and learning and the teachers do not receive systematic guidance on how to continually improve their teaching and the pupils' learning. The teachers have not had enough opportunity to observe each other teaching and to share the good practice which exists in the school. At times the nature of the pupils' behavioural difficulties means that behaviour begins to interfere with their learning and with the pace of the lesson. Sometimes this is skilfully managed by the staff. In one class in particular there are well thought out and effective plans for supporting individual pupils when they experience difficulties. Overall, however, the school does not have a sufficiently consistent approach to managing the behaviour of individual pupils in the classroom.

Aspects of assessment have improved since the previous inspection, particularly in literacy. The teachers meet together to assess the pupils' writing skills twice a year: these assessments have been used to ensure that the pupils' learning is broken down into small steps to help them to make progress. Generally, however, information gathered from assessment is not recorded rigorously enough, or used properly to help the school to track the pupils' progress in each curriculum area. Targets are not set for the pupils in curriculum areas and some of the behaviour targets are too vague. The senior team has begun to review the school's assessment policy and procedures and has made some sensible decisions about how to improve the school's work in this crucial area. Grade: 3

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The pupils have access to the full National Curriculum. Generous staffing allows the pupils to be taught in small groups which helps them to receive appropriate attention. The pupils take part in a range of enrichment activities which help their learning and their personal development, and which they enjoy. Some impressive work has been carried out by the Learning to Grow team to develop a curriculum which helps to meet the pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs. This is at an early stage of use in the school but has great potential for further improving this aspect of the curriculum. In one class the curriculum has been modified, with a greater emphasis on learning through playing and through working together. This meets the pupils' needs well. The school is poised to carry out a curriculum review and to extend some of its more creative work.

Grade: 3

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

The staff are highly committed to ensuring that the pupils are well cared for and supported. This shows in their keen awareness of the pupils' individual circumstances. As a result any difficulties are quickly noticed and action is taken. The views of the pupils are sensitively sought. The headteacher has begun to address the few concerns which some pupils expressed last term, and a school council is about to begin. In one class there is a book in which the pupils are asked to record their views on a range of issues and to help to find solutions to any class problems. The pupils were positive about the opportunities they receive in the school and the way in which the school cares for them.

The procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection procedures, are clear. The nature of the pupils' needs means that they occasionally put themselves in danger, so the school has developed clear procedures for minimising such incidents and for handling them well if they do occur. The staff have undergone appropriate training to help them to manage issues which arise owing to the pupils' emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is sensibly modifying the area where pupils go to calm down when they are very upset.

Annual reviews of the pupils' statements of special educational need are thorough. The school has good procedures for ensuring that pupils who join the school part way through the year are placed in the best class for them and are quickly integrated into the school. Individual plans for managing the behaviour of some of the pupils would strengthen this area of the school's work further.

Grade: 2

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

The new headteacher has quickly and accurately evaluated the school's strengths and already has a good understanding of the areas which need improvement. She has already made a positive impact on aspects of the school's work and has established a clear direction for the future. The senior leadership team is working together effectively; new responsibilities have been shared out well and the senior staff are taking firm leadership of their own areas. Good leadership of the Learning to Grow project has resulted in some very successful work with pupils from other local schools, and some aspects have also helped to develop practice at Kings Meadow. The school's links with a range of different professionals are good and well managed; this has a clear impact on the school's work. Communication with parents is good and their views are sought, for example through the daily home school diary and through annual reviews. Parents' views of the school are positive: one parent, for example, noted that the school helped pupils to 'learn skills for when they grow into adults'.

Self-evaluation has been a weakness in the school for some time. Until recently there has been a lack of rigour in the way that lessons are observed, although this began to improve during the summer term after the senior staff received training. Pupils' progress has not been well tracked or evaluated. The role of the subject leaders is underdeveloped. Monitoring of pupils' behaviour has not been sufficiently rigorous: as a result practice has remained too static and systems have not been updated as necessary. The new headteacher quickly identified these flaws and has already started to work with the senior team to put appropriate systems and structures in place, for example to scrutinise the progress which pupils make in lessons, to observe teaching on a regular basis and to analyse and act upon the data on behaviour.

The day-to-day management of the school is good. Clearly established routines ensure that main events during the day, such as arrivals and departures, breaktimes and lunchtimes, run smoothly and are well supervised. As a result the school is generally calm and purposeful and pupils know what is expected of them at key times. Suitable procedures are in place to deal with difficulties which may arise during the day.

The new chair of the governing body has a very good understanding of the needs of the school and how to support its improvement. She is clearly focused on ensuring that the governing body becomes highly evaluative.

Grade: 3

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed coming to visit your school. You were very kind and polite to me, which made me feel really welcome. Thank you for talking to me and telling me about Kings Meadow. I really enjoyed listening to you, visiting your lessons and coming to your assembly. I could see that you try hard to do your best and help each other. Well done! Your teachers and support staff are very good at caring for you. They try hard to help you to improve your behaviour and your work.

You look after your school very well indeed. It was good to see your work displayed in the corridors and the classrooms. I really like the way you recycle paper and take responsibility for collecting the recycling bins. I know that Mrs Lewis has talked to you about setting up a school council. You already have lots of ideas about how to make your school even better and you will be very good school council members.

I have asked your school to do a few things to help you learn even better. I want Mrs Lewis to make sure that you keep working your hardest and get the best possible results you can before you leave the school. To help you with this I have asked your teachers to check more often that you are getting on with your work as well as you should do. I have also asked Mrs Lewis and your teachers to think of more ways to help you to keep improving your behaviour.

Thank you again for being so kind and helpful. Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Mrs King

Her Majesty's Inspector