



Kettering Park Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121840
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292235
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Park Avenue
School category	Community		Kettering
Age range of pupils	4–7		NN16 9RU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 481922
Number on roll (school)	267	Fax number	01536 481922
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Richard Lewis
		Headteacher	Margaret Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006	Inspection number 292235
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kettering Park is a large infant school that is popular and oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average but there are several pupils in the Reception classes who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. When children join the Reception classes, their skills are similar to those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kettering Park Infant is a good school with the capacity to become even better. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the quality of education provided. 'We are extremely happy with the school and feel that all staff are excellent and have the children's best interests at heart. The school is always friendly and welcoming and we are looking forward to our youngest child starting next September.' These comments by a parent are indicative of the views of many others.

Overall, pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, they attain standards that are significantly above the national average in reading and mathematics, and very high standards in writing. This picture of good achievement has been evident for the last four years and is the result of good teaching in Years 1 and 2. Children receive a satisfactory start in the Reception classes. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily. However, there is a lack of excitement and the limited resources and lack of clearly planned activities inhibit children's creative and physical development. Standards in writing are particularly good because teachers set very clear targets and older pupils are frequently taught in very focused small groups. Although standards in mathematics are good, the school recognises teaching could be sharper. Work is sometimes repeated unnecessarily and lessons are sometimes too long. Pupils achieve well in science because lessons are made interesting.

Pupils' personal and social development is good. They behave well, thoroughly enjoy school and eagerly participate in all aspects of school life. Older pupils are keen to tell how they help by befriending younger pupils. However, they do not have enough opportunities to influence what happens in school as there are no formal arrangements for them to voice their views. The curriculum is good, providing pupils with a wide range of interesting activities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe as a result of the good care and guidance they receive. The academic guidance is good, helping most pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive particularly good support, enabling them to make rapid gains in their acquisition of English.

Leadership and management at all levels are good and there is a good capacity for further improvement. There is a very clear focus on improving standards and staff are keen to consider new ideas that will help them address this goal. There are detailed assessments of pupils' learning but staff recognise that they are cumbersome. There is a need to streamline them and make effective use of computer technology to help better identify if groups of pupils are not doing as well as they might and where strengths and weaknesses in teaching lie.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enrich the Foundation Stage curriculum by providing the children with more opportunities to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, and improve the resources to enable them to do so.

- Enhance pupils' progress in mathematics by avoiding the unnecessary repetition of teaching some skills.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to influence what is happening in school by surveying their views more rigorously and through setting up a more formal structure for sampling their opinions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 2 show that pupils achieve well. In the years from 2003 to 2005, standards were significantly above the national average in reading and mathematics, and very high in writing. They improved further in 2006, and inspection evidence shows that pupils continue to achieve well and maintain high standards. However, there is some unnecessary repetition of work in mathematics for some pupils, without which they could do even better. The pupils do well in science because they are provided with a good range of interesting activities to undertake, supported by visits and visitors that add interest to the subject. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the good level and quality of support. The significant progress made by pupils at an early stage of learning English is the result of the very effective support by school staff. In the Reception classes, children's progress in physical and creative development is limited by the lack of carefully planned opportunities for them to improve their skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development is reflected in their enjoyment of school, their positive attitudes, their politeness and their good behaviour. 'School is like a big family,' said one pupil. Children in the Reception classes quickly learn to share, take turns and help one another. Attendance is satisfactory and improving.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a very harmonious community where all pupils, regardless of background and culture, work and play well together. Pupils take an active part in school life, readily taking responsibility, for example, as playground friends and fruit monitors. At the present time, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to contribute to the decisions taken in school, for example, through a school council. Pupils enjoy contributing to the community through the local 'operation spring clean', their fundraising for charity and their links with the local churches. They know how to keep safe and understand the importance of healthy eating, with the vast majority eating fresh fruit every morning break. Their good personal development, together with their good basic skills in literacy and numeracy, prepares pupils well for the next stage of education and for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers are conscientious, enthusiastic and committed to doing their best for the pupils. They expect pupils to work hard and to behave well. As a result, pupils respond well and most lessons proceed at a good pace. Staff develop pupils' self-esteem well through the effective use of praise. 'I like the teachers because they help me to do better in all my work,' said one pupil. However, there is unnecessary repetition of work in mathematics in some classes.

Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English. Consequently, these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates. Pupils' good progress is the result of good teaching over time. Progress is most marked in Years 1 and 2 and this is why standards are consistently significantly above the national average. Pupils' writing skills develop particularly well as a result of the opportunities to work in small groups with skilled support. Although pupils work well, they are sometimes given insufficient opportunities to work independently and to take more responsibility for their own learning. There are examples of good marking but this is not consistent and it does not always identify how the pupils might improve their work further. Assessment is used well to monitor pupils' progress and ensure that work is well matched to their needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and successfully meets the needs of the school's diverse community. Teachers place an emphasis on the development of the basic skills that children will need to practice from Reception to Year 2. Additionally, they select a good range of activities to support the significant number of children with little or no English who arrive in the school, sometimes at short notice. There are good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills through the teaching of all subjects, but the use of computers to support learning in other subjects is still in its infancy. The school provides a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, with activities at breaktime such as games and 'Huff and Puff'. Visits to art galleries and nearby stately homes add interest to the curriculum and enhance pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Links with the community through the summer fayre and harvest festival maintain the school in the heart of its local area. The curriculum for the children in the Reception classes lacks clear planning to provide a rich and varied range of activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support, a view shared by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

The pupils like their teachers and appreciate their efforts to help them feel safe and enjoy their learning. Health and safety procedures are effective and reviewed regularly. Child protection procedures are rigorous and there are good systems to support any pupils who are vulnerable and to help their families. The school works closely with parents if they have any concerns and the headteacher is swift to allay anxieties.

The tracking of pupils' academic and personal development is good. As a result, pupils feel happy, secure and able to achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are supported extremely well and support is well matched to their needs. Although there are detailed assessments undertaken in the Foundation Stage, information is not used as well as it could be to promote learning. Pupils are made aware of the school's rules and expectations of good behaviour with the help of older pupils who act as 'buddies' to those new to the school, enabling them to settle quickly. Everyone is valued equally and the school works hard to encourage parents to be genuine partners in their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. There is no complacency and staff work hard to ensure the standards seen over the last few years are maintained and there is a clear capacity for further improvement. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and this ensures that school leaders have a thorough understanding of how well the school is doing. There are good links with parents and many questionnaires returned to the inspectors commented on the strong links that exist between school and home. This relationship is a positive factor in the promotion of pupils' reading skills. The building inhibits some aspects of the curriculum for younger children but the leadership has not yet sufficiently considered how it might improve the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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 the 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?	2

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Kettering Park is providing you with a good education.

Here are some of the highlights of your school

- Your reading and mathematics are of a good standard and you do exceptionally well in your writing.
- You behave well and enjoy your lessons and other activities.
- You have good relationships with one another and with the staff.
- Adults look after you well and keep you safe.
- You are developing a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.

These are the things we have suggested the school does now

- Give the youngest children more interesting and exciting things to do.
- Make sure that you do not repeat work in mathematics if you already understand it.
- Give you the chance to tell the school what you like about it and what you would like to change.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.