

Kimbolton St James CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116890
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	326476
Inspection date	26 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	85
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	11
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Merrick
Headteacher	Sarah Tudor
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kimbolton Leominster HR6 0HQ
Telephone number	01568 612691

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	26 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the effectiveness of the school's tracking system and the quality of feedback which pupils receive on their work
- how effectively leaders at all levels monitor the school's work and identify areas for improvement
- how well the curriculum promotes cultural development and understanding.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, scrutiny of pupils' work and a range of the school's documentation, parental questionnaires and national assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural school serving the village of Kimbolton and its surrounding area. There are four mixed-age classes, including the Early Years Foundation Stage which is taught with Year 1. The headteacher teaches for half the week. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. The school gained the Healthy School Award in 2007 and has achieved the Eco Schools silver award. The nursery on the school site is run privately and was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has a clear set of values underpinning its ethos and outstanding spiritual and moral development of pupils. Pupils describe being in the school as 'belonging to a family'. Parents value the excellent care and safe environment provided by the school. As one parent said, 'It has a lovely, warm, family feel to it. It shows in the children as they grow in confidence and maturity through the years.'

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, well nurtured by this caring environment and the good curriculum. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is excellent, with pupils of all ages demonstrating how to eat and drink healthily. They take part very enthusiastically in 'huff and puff' sessions at lunchtimes. Attendance at school is well above average because pupils enjoy school immensely. They particularly enjoy meeting with friends and social development is excellent. Older pupils are very caring towards younger ones. As an eco-school it has promoted many opportunities for pupils to make an excellent contribution to the community, for example, through the recycling and compost-making schemes. The well-established school council plays a very active part in the school's development. They are currently organising the sale of specially designed water bottles for use with the fountain which they installed last year. These skills, when coupled with fast-improving information and communication technology (ICT) skills, are preparing pupils well for the future. Pupils are now able to use ICT across a range of subjects following the provision of a set of laptops. Class 4, for example, used them in science to investigate the properties of different materials. There are, however, limited planned opportunities for pupils to use and practise different ways of writing in subjects other than literacy. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe through, for example, visits to the local 'crucial crew' scheme. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and the world is enhanced well by a wide range of enrichment programmes, including a strong link with a school in Tanzania.

Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents good progress throughout the school. Standards in reading are consistently well above average because there is an effective guided reading programme in place. At the end of Year 6, the number of pupils reaching above average levels in writing is lower than in other subjects. The school has identified the reasons for this. The work of current pupils indicates that strategies introduced to accelerate the progress of pupils in writing are raising standards. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support which meets their needs, and teaching assistants provide effective support in classrooms.

Teaching is good. The very positive relationships between all members of a class promote effective learning. Excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning from all pupils promote a stimulating learning environment. Lessons are planned carefully and classrooms are well organised. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and they are fully aware of the steps they need to make to reach them. Planning takes account of the range of needs and ages in a class and there is excellent liaison between teachers and teaching assistants. There are a few occasions, however, when the work set is not always sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils in a group to enable them to make faster progress.

Care, guidance and support are good. All procedures to ensure pupils' safety are securely in place. Pupils in need of additional support are identified quickly and a range of strategies is in place to meet these needs. A newly implemented system to track the progress of pupils is being

used well by school leaders and classroom teachers to check that pupils are making appropriate progress towards their challenging targets. Where pupils are not on track, systems are in place to provide additional support. The school is currently developing its use of guidance and feedback to pupils on how to reach their targets. Plans are leading to improvement, particularly in literacy.

The school's good leadership and management have tackled issues from the last inspection effectively. Systems to check and evaluate the school's work have been put in place and are being used well by the school's leadership and governors to identify priorities for improvement. Subsequent plans are leading to improvements in standards and provision and this demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further. Good governance is playing an effective part in school improvement, particularly in developing useful partnerships and promoting good community cohesion. Most parents who returned the inspection questionnaire are very supportive of the school's work. A small number voiced understandable concerns about the lack of continuity of teaching which has affected one class. School leaders and governors are dealing with this difficulty well, employing a number of strategies to minimise the effects on pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills typically expected for their age, children's abilities vary widely in speech and language. A number of children, particularly younger ones, have communication, language and literacy skill levels which are lower than those of children of their age. Well-planned induction procedures help children to settle well. Good leadership ensures children's needs are identified quickly, and support is targeted so that children make good progress from the very first day. Children are well taught and there are excellent systems for teachers and teaching assistants to monitor and record their progress. Children are very well cared for and staff have high expectations of children's progress and knowledge of safety procedures.

Good use is made of a creative range of activities, within a well-organised curriculum, to stimulate children's interests. It is good rather than outstanding because although pupils benefit from well-developed indoor and outdoor learning activities, not all tasks provide sufficient challenge for the most able children. There is particular emphasis on personal, social and language development and the development of writing. This was seen during adult-directed activities involving children as 'sound detectives' in the outside area as part of the development of letters and sounds awareness. Children enjoy their time in Reception. They behave very well and make good progress from a wide variety of starting points. Children enter Year 1 with the standards expected for their age. A number exceed these standards, particularly in mathematics. Staff manage the mixed-age class well, ensuring that children in Year 1 and Reception have appropriate learning opportunities. They keep meticulous records which give both the school and parents a clear view of how well children are progressing. Parents appreciate the 'open door' policy and the exceptional efforts made by the staff to ensure parents are well informed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Include greater challenge for the more able pupils at both key stages so that their rate of progress increases.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and practise the skills learned in literacy across a wider range of subjects and activities in order to raise standards at the higher levels.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Kimbolton St James Church of England Primary School, Kimbolton HR6 0HQ

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly on our recent inspection of your school, which we have judged to be a good school. I would like to share with you what we learned about the school. These are the things we particularly liked.

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards which are above average. Your standards in reading are very good.
- You enjoy school very much, and working with your friends on the many activities during and after the school day. Your teachers plan interesting lessons.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourself healthy, and take part in activities very enthusiastically to achieve this.
- Your behaviour and attendance are excellent.
- You welcome opportunities to serve your school and local community. The number of jobs you take on board and the willingness you show is impressive. You have very good ideas of your own which you act on responsibly. You have seized the eco-school challenge very enthusiastically and your plans are having an impact.
- Your school is well led by the headteacher and governors and all staff care for you well and support you to do your best.

These are the things I have asked the school to improve, to make it even better:

- We think some of you could be challenged more to achieve higher levels in your academic work.
- We would like to see you having more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects and activities, not just literacy, so that they are as good as your reading skills.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook

Lead inspector