

# Kingsway Infants' School

North Approach, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 0ES

## Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The leadership is outstanding. The headteacher and the leadership team have established an ethos of hard work and high aspirations and expectations to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential.
- The senior leadership team is the driving force of the school. Working collaboratively with staff, senior leaders work tirelessly to ensure that teaching, intervention and support meet the needs of the pupils at Kingsway Infants' School.
- Governors are committed and highly effective in both supporting and challenging the school to provide the best education for the pupils in their care.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, at the end of key stage 1 significantly exceeded the national standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015 and 2016.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made progress in line with national pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Pupils develop understanding of different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Leaders and staff ensure that vulnerable pupils, in particular, are well supported through a range of carefully structured interventions. The impact of the support provided by staff is evident in the progress that pupils make both academically and socially.
- Leaders have created a broad and rich curriculum offering pupils opportunities to develop skills in areas such as philosophy and Spanish.
- Where teachers expertly match tasks and activities to the learning needs of pupils, they demonstrate high levels of concentration and engagement.
- Where tasks and activities are not sufficiently challenging, a few pupils lose interest and can cause low-level disruption.
- While improving, the teaching of phonics does not allow some pupils to use their phonics knowledge effectively to support their reading in Reception and Year 1.
- Teachers in Reception do not always challenge children's understanding of language and communication to support their emerging reading, writing and mathematics skills.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching, learning and assessment in Reception outstanding by:
  - raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics
  - providing a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their communication and language skills
  - ensuring consistently high standards in the teaching of phonics
  - ensuring that activities and tasks are consistently matched to the learning needs of pupils.
- Improve the quality of behaviour by:
  - ensuring that pupils are consistently engaged and enthused by the tasks and activities they study across the curriculum
  - developing strategies to support the few pupils who engage in low-level disruptive behaviour.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher and her leadership team have a tenacious approach to ensuring continued improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Their high aspirations and expectations for the success of their pupils are effectively disseminated and shared by all staff. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress at key stage 1 and exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher ensures that leadership is delegated very effectively. Consequently, leadership of English and mathematics is outstanding. Subject leaders have ensured that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make accelerated progress from their relative starting points in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. Leaders have a clear vision regarding how to improve specific areas of the curriculum that are not yet outstanding such as phonics in Year 1 and Reception and mathematics, reading and writing in Reception. They work collaboratively with staff to improve the ways in which assessment information is used to inform teaching.
- Leaders are probing in their analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and provide highly effective support. As a consequence, leaders bring about swift improvements across the curriculum and raise standards in all year groups. Leaders source highly effective support both through internal mentoring systems and external consultancy provided by Hertfordshire local authority. Leaders have established a personalised training programme for all staff to address specific areas of the curriculum that require strengthening.
- Leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. The school ensures that pupils' needs are catered for exceptionally well and that additional funding is spent well. A range of expert interventions such as play therapy and well-trained teaching assistants are provided to support the academic, social and emotional progress that all pupils are capable of. The inspector observed highly engaged and motivated pupils whose complex needs were well met throughout the year groups.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum for all pupils is broad and enriching. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the wider world through subjects such as Spanish and philosophy. For example, an inspector observed pupils discussing abstract concepts such as changes in life experience in sophisticated ways in a Year 2 class.
- Pupils access a wide variety of extra-curricular activities such as dance and cooking. In addition, having identified issues with pupils' progress in phonics and early years mathematics, leaders organised highly successful parent workshops to enable them to help their children.
- Pupils, some from very vulnerable backgrounds, are very well prepared to become responsible and engaged citizens of twenty-first century Britain. Pupils engage in the process of democracy through elections to the school council. Pupils are extremely proud of their role in the school council and feel a sense of civic responsibility in representing their classmates in discussions with the headteacher. Leaders ensure the

academic, social and emotional well-being of their pupils. They display exceptional care. For example, the attendance of some groups of pupils has been below the national average but this has gradually improved due to the range of strategies and incentives provided, such as keyboard lessons before the start of the school day.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Leaders and staff support the development of pupils' emotional resilience and self-confidence as learners well. Pupils develop philosophical ideas about the world around them through weekly philosophy lessons. Staff encourage pupils to explore their ideas and feelings through carefully structured approaches, including questions emerging from specific objects such as teddy bears. Consequently, pupils are able to overcome barriers to their learning swiftly.
- Leaders spend the primary sports premium funding well. For example, all pupils have the opportunity to swim at the neighbouring junior school swimming pool. Many pupils told the inspector that they had learned to swim for the first time during these swimming lessons. A specialist sports coach provides additional sport activities for pupils at either end of the school day and lunchtime. Staff have also received training to run more focused sports activities for pupils throughout the curriculum such as the early morning exercise, 'shake and wake'. An inspector observed the enthusiasm and focused concentration of Reception pupils exercising to music in the morning.
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils extremely well to improve their progress across the curriculum. Leaders frequently review the impact of this support and make adjustments where necessary. For example, regular one-to-one reading and phonics support has had marked success in improving pupils' outcomes. The additional funding pays for an additional specialist intervention teacher who works one-to-one within a structured literacy programme. This intervention accelerates the progress of pupils who were previously struggling.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing board is outstanding. It provides highly effective support and challenge in equal measure to the school leadership. Through regular, targeted visits to the school and meetings with staff, governors have established a very informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The governing board's work is explicitly linked to the school's improvement priorities, ensuring that it is instrumental in supporting the school to improve. The governors have a clear understanding of the focus on improving pupils' understanding of phonics and the development of children's language and core skills in Reception. As a result, they ask pertinent questions and set challenging goals for senior and middle leaders.
- Governors are rigorous in their management of the performance of the headteacher. They are robust in their review of the performance-related pay of staff.
- Governors review pupil achievement, attendance and behaviour, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, with appropriate rigour. They examine the strategies and approaches paid for by additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and ensure that the impact is evaluated well. For example, the governing board recognise the profound impact that the additional literacy specialist has on accelerating pupils' progress in reading and writing.

- All governors receive regular training, including statutory safeguarding training.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding leads work tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils in their care. They have established very clear referral systems for staff, parents and pupils that are reviewed daily. They respond in a timely and effective manner supported by the careful collation of documentation. They always pursue referrals to outside agencies to ensure that the best support and resolution for the child is achieved.
- The single central record of checks on staff is in order and regularly quality assured by Hertfordshire local authority. Staff files are well maintained. Staff appointments meet all statutory requirements.
- Staff receive regular and effective training on identifying signs of abuse and the most up-to-date guidance regarding keeping children safe.
- Parents and staff who responded to the online surveys were unanimous in their view that pupils at Kingsway Infants' School were kept safe.
- E-safety is a strength of the school and all pupils who spoke to the inspector were alert to the dangers posed by the internet and knew what to do if they were approached by a stranger.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong in many subject areas. For example, staff structure carefully considered philosophical concepts well. In a Year 1 class, pupils considered the question, 'is change a good thing?', and staff supported pupils' thinking to elicit perceptive responses about how change had affected their lives.
- Teachers in all classes use an effective range of resources to support pupils' learning. For example, all pupils have access to mats that explain the sounds that letters make and number lines both on their tables and on the walls that they use regularly to help their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' questioning is effective in helping pupils to structure their ideas. Some teachers provide additional support alongside valuable thinking time to help pupils establish clear answers. For example, in a Year 1 topic lesson, pupils used mirrors to observe how they had physically changed in comparison to photographs taken at the beginning of the year. Pupils formulated their responses to the question about how they had changed through drawing the changes they observed, writing sentences and talking to adults and their peers. This carefully structured approach to questioning was highly successful in engaging pupils in their learning.
- Staff have worked extensively with external partners and each other to ensure the robustness of their school assessments. Feedback from Hertfordshire local authority writing moderators in May 2016 was very positive and praised the staff's accuracy and the range of writing opportunities afforded to pupils.
- Staff follow common approaches to assessment throughout Years 1 and 2. Targeted

feedback is provided to promote pupils' progress.

- Pupils demonstrate pride in their work through high-quality presentation. All pupils, including children in Reception, are taught 'joined handwriting' and how to develop their handling of pens and pencils. Pupils spend time ensuring careful letter formation, resulting in consistently impressive handwriting by Year 2.
- Newly qualified teachers are provided with effectively structured support within the school. The mentoring programme is very effective in supporting teachers to respond to feedback from regular observations. As a result, newly qualified teachers make rapid progress and support their pupils very well.
- Reading plays a critically important role in developing pupils' understanding of the whole curriculum. Staff read a range of exciting texts to pupils every day helping to develop their enjoyment of fiction and their understanding of how language shapes meaning. Pupils are able to take books out of the school's well-stocked library on a weekly basis. All pupils have the opportunity to read regularly to an adult to help develop their fluency and understanding. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make accelerated progress in reading by the end of Year 2 and exceed national standards.
- Staff are acutely aware of the needs of their disadvantaged pupils and ensure that additional support, where necessary, is provided. For example, all disadvantaged pupils read daily on a one-to-one basis with a staff member. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils of all abilities achieve above national expectations in reading.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make very good progress across the curriculum as a result of teachers' consistently high expectations and aspirations. For example, at key stage 1 teachers provide time and opportunities for the most able pupils to write at length and with more complexity.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive tailored support pertinent to their learning needs. Pupils are wholly included in the curriculum, resulting in progress in line with other pupils nationally across the curriculum.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently effective across the year groups. Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 do not always apply their phonics knowledge to help them decode words. However, by the end of Year 2 all pupils are able to decode and read very effectively.
- Some teachers do not consistently draw on pupils' different starting points to inform the activities and tasks they set for pupils. Consequently, a few pupils become distracted as the tasks are not sufficiently challenging to extend their understanding.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils discuss and debate ideas such as philosophical concepts about their lives in sophisticated, considered ways. They demonstrate high levels of empathy for the feelings and perspectives of their classmates. Pupils with complex emotional needs make particularly rapid progress in improving their self-esteem and self-confidence.

One pupil told an inspector, 'When I was little, I used to be shy, but now because of school, I am confident.'

- Pupils are punctual and prepared to learn in lessons. Pupils in every year group display high levels of enthusiasm for learning and enjoy being at school. Many parents, responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, noted how happy their children were at the school.
- The school is highly alert to the social and emotional changes in pupils' behaviour and responds swiftly and pertinently. For example, the school offers specialist play therapy to strengthen pupils' emotional resilience and to remove barriers to learning. As a result, many pupils who experienced difficulty accessing the curriculum have been able to flourish both socially and academically. In addition, the school works closely with a family support worker to ensure that pupils receive a breadth of effective support.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have very positive attitudes towards school and learning. They are included in every aspect of school life. Staff who support these pupils ensure that they are part of every lesson and provide effective support.
- Pupils explore different faiths throughout the curriculum such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Through the school's strong links with the local church, pupils experience the ways in which faith informs people's lives. In addition, parents of different faiths often lead assemblies explaining the importance and role of their faith in their lives.
- Support for pupils' well-being is a strength of the school. Regular pupil-progress meetings review the academic development of each pupil in the school with a range of staff and identify associated social and emotional issues. Pupils who the inspector spoke to explained that staff listen and provide good support to help them resolve any problems.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy a breadth of opportunities to play at break and lunchtime in well-supervised spaces. The outside area is large and well structured to encourage pupil play. Pupils behave well, take turns and play collaboratively and supportively.
- Pupils' behaviour within the classroom and around the school is good. They understand the rules of the classroom very well. However, where the challenge of activities and tasks is not pitched accurately, a few pupils become disengaged and create low-level disruption in some lessons.
- Until recently, attendance levels for disadvantaged pupils were below the national average. However, leaders have identified the issues and put effective measures in place, which has led to a reduction in absence and lateness.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- In 2015 and 2016, pupils made progress above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. At the end of Year 2, pupils are able to write and read

and calculate with a high degree of fluency and understanding.

- In 2016, pupils significantly exceeded the national standards for reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1.
- In 2015 and 2016, disadvantaged pupils significantly exceeded the national standard for reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress from their varying starting points and current data indicates that this is sustained.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make good progress across the curriculum. They significantly exceed national expectations in reading and are in line with national expectations for writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils were above the national standard in science. Pupils gain key skills as they study the key stage 1 science curriculum. They apply their writing, reading and mathematics skills well to a range of science tasks and experiments.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently make progress in line with other pupils nationally. The special educational needs and/or disabilities leads have tailored support resulting in good progress for current pupils.
- Phonics teaching and learning are not consistently effective at key stage 1 and Reception. This is reflected in the decline in results in 2016 when the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national standard.
- In 2014 and 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in early years was below the national average. This improved in 2015 but was not sustained in 2016. Although children's mathematics, writing and reading have improved, they are still below the national average.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years is very well led and managed. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have made excellent progress in improving outcomes for children. The leader of the early years is acutely aware of the importance of improving the teaching, learning and assessment of the key skills of reading, writing, mathematics and communication and language. There is a clear development plan that has been embedded and resulted in current impact. Children engage readily in learning activities that are carefully designed to stimulate and develop their emerging skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is good. For example, staff recognise the importance of developing early reading, writing and mathematics skills. They work hard to ensure that all activities reinforce these core skills.
- Through careful and insightful auditing of outdoor provision, leadership of early years identified key gaps in developing children's physical skills and core skills and redesigned the space. Complemented by focused training of early years staff, early years leaders have succeeded in improving the progress of children. The outdoor area is well structured and promotes play-based learning very effectively. Children are enthusiastic and eager to engage in activities outside. For example, they develop their physical

skills such as manipulating tools in preparation for using pencils and pens well.

- Staff are highly responsive to the learning needs of children. For example, an inspector observed the transformation in a child when using a computer to write as opposed to pencil and paper. Her difficulty with organising her letter shapes had become a barrier to her enjoyment of writing and the computer keyboard removed this barrier. As a result, the inspector observed the child's sheer joy at writing unaided.
- The school provides a safe and caring learning environment. Children behave well and enjoy the company of others. They work and play well together, showing that they can take turns and share sensibly. They listen carefully to adults and to each other. Their good behaviour suggests that they feel safe in school.
- Parents who responded to Parent View were unanimous in their praise for the ways in which the early years staff and environment supported their children's social and learning skills.
- Phonics teaching is not always reinforced to support children's emerging reading skills. Children listen very well to stories read by adults and provide thoughtful, empathetic responses but sometimes these are not developed well.
- Early years leadership is having a positive impact on raising standards. Outcomes for children, including disadvantaged children, are improving rapidly towards national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Children are beginning to develop their language skills more effectively across early years.
- Occasionally, tasks set for children are not sufficiently challenging or supportive dependent on their differing starting points. Early years leadership continues to monitor the use of assessment to inform teaching and learning and to provide pertinent staff training. While outcomes for children are still slightly below national standards, the inspector saw the positive impact of leaders' work.

## School details

Unique reference number	117317
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031500

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Smith
Headteacher	Caroline Tristram-Walmsley
Telephone number	01923 675005
Website	<a href="http://www.kingsway.herts.sch.uk">www.kingsway.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@kingsway.herts.sch.uk">head@kingsway.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons, including lessons in Reception and key stage 1, jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; deputy headteacher; the leaders of mathematics, English, science, personal, social and health education, early years, special educational needs and/or disabilities; three governors; the Hertfordshire local authority school improvement partner; pupils and teachers.
- Pupils' books and records of their progress were scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading experiences with them.
- Account was taken of the 32 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's development plan and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding policies and records, and records made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

## Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Jones

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Harbrow

Ofsted Inspector

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