

# Knowle Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113277
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	357309
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joy Littlejohns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judy Milford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Ringmore Way Plymouth PL5 3QG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 365364
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 351007
<b>Email address</b>	knowle.primary.school@plymouth.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed and thirteen teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, governing body minutes and a range of other documentation. One hundred and twenty two responses to the parental questionnaire were received and analysed, together with 132 pupil and 25 staff responses to their respective questionnaires. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following

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- Pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics.
- The impact of teaching on the acceleration of pupil progress.
- The contribution to progress being made by the linking of subjects.
- The impact of wider leadership on the quality and impact of school self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

This larger-than-average-sized school serves its local area in West Park Plymouth. A well above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. The school also has a small number of Traveller pupils. An above average percentage of pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, including behavioural, moderate and specific learning difficulties. A higher than average number of pupils join year groups throughout the school during each academic year. This includes a number of pupils who had experienced difficulty in other schools. Four teachers had joined the school at the beginning of the term in which the inspection took place.

**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: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Knowle is a good school. There is a clear understanding, shared by all staff, that helping pupils to make good academic progress is the most important function of the school. Outstanding care, guidance and support and good teaching ensure that the pupils overall make good progress. As a result, they achieve well. They enter the school in Reception with well below expected attainment and leave with attainment that is only a little below average.

Pupils like being in school. They are provided with a good curriculum and speak very enthusiastically about the very wide range of activities that are available to them. Staff work hard to enthuse pupils through the links they make between subjects and through first-hand learning experiences. Good use is made of the local environment and this gives pupils good opportunities to learn to understand their local community and to contribute to making it a better place. A school parliament, that has functions and offices that mirror those in Westminster, provides the pupils with an outstanding opportunity to become active contributors to school improvement. They take up this opportunity with considerable zeal and impact.

Pupils show respect for each other as well as adults, and remarkable empathy for those experiencing difficulties in their personal lives. Work to extend their understanding of difference has had a positive impact, which shows in the way they discuss issues such as racism, as well as in their everyday conduct. Good relationships assist teachers to manage pupils very well in class and beyond and the very large majority behave very well. Teaching assistants play a significant part in promoting good progress. They are particularly effective when they teach small groups, especially promoting the good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although teaching is good overall, there remain some inconsistencies. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long, reducing the time pupils have for practical activity and for practising what they have been taught. In addition, teachers do not always fully challenge higher attaining pupils and thus enable them to make maximum progress.

Determined, energetic leadership by the headteacher and senior staff has promoted improving pupil progress. There is strong use of data to identify the progress being made by individuals and groups of pupils and this is used well to both target provision and to identify areas for school improvement. Actions based on this analysis are well thought out and successful. For example, the initiative to improve the pupils' understanding of how to improve their work has been instrumental in increasing attainment in writing. The school has correctly identified the need to improve pupils' understanding of how to improve their work in mathematics. The school tries very hard to encourage parents and carers to be partners in helping their child to develop and make progress. Although many parents and carers respond very positively, there remains a small number who, despite considerable

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prompting by the school, does not ensure that their child attends school regularly enough. The school forges very strong, wide ranging partnerships, with a very positive impact on pupils' progress and development. The track record of successful school development initiatives and the shared desire to continue to improve show the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Assist pupils to make maximum progress by:
  - ensuring all lessons have a good balance of teacher talk and pupil activity
  - developing the use of assessment to help pupils know better how to improve their work in mathematics
  - ensuring that higher attaining pupils are fully challenged in all parts of each lesson
  - improving rates of attendance.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils feel safe and secure in school and are confident that staff will help and support them academically and personally. An example of this confidence was seen in the open way pupils were able to discuss a story about a grandparent and grandson anticipating the death of the former. This activity developed pupils' understanding of the way an author uses language to provoke emotions, as well as demonstrating pupils' excellent spiritual and moral development. The focus on the use of data to check and promote the progress of all pupils is successful. A range of well-organised support initiatives particularly assist more troubled and vulnerable pupils to make good progress. When Traveller pupils attend school regularly, they too make good progress. At present, progress in English is better established than it is in mathematics where it is only in the last year that pupils have made good progress. There is well conceived ongoing development work to ensure this improvement is sustained. In many ways, pupils are very well prepared for their future working lives. The large majority work hard and want to succeed. They concentrate well in lessons and work well in collaboration with others. However, not all pupils are supported by their parents or carers in understanding that attendance is a key workplace skill. Concerted school action means that rates of attendance have been quickly improving and few pupils are persistently absent. However, overall attendance remains too low. The pupils know how to keep themselves healthy. They put this knowledge into practice in respect of physical activity, but are not all as willing to eat healthy food as they know they should be.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The school leaders have managed the considerable number of staff changes well. Although early in the term, shared planning means that there is consistency of approach as well as of lesson content. There is consistent management of a small number of pupils who find self control difficult, so lessons are conducted in a good working environment. Where there are inconsistencies, it is in the proportion of a lesson that some teachers take up in talking to pupils, which does not allow them sufficient time for the application and consolidation of what has been taught. On occasion, higher attaining pupils are expected to sit and listen while the teacher instructs the whole class about things they already know and understand. In English, clear targets and the helpful marking of work help pupils know how to improve. Although the school has begun to develop similar practice in mathematics, it is not yet well enough established to be as useful. Successful work has gone into providing a curriculum that gives relevance to learning. Pupils were, for example, much better able to understand how to write a recount because they were writing about a trip they had undertaken to the local library. Literacy skills are helpfully promoted by these links between subjects, but this type of link is not as well developed in mathematics. The greatest care is taken of all pupils and this is used to ensure that each is enabled to make good progress academically and personally. Each pupil is known, valued and nurtured as an individual and in the words of a parent, 'The school goes the extra mile in supporting them.' There are extensive partnerships with others that maximise the support the school is able to give.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior staff promote the forward-looking attitude of the school well. There is a clear, accurate view of what is needed to promote school improvement and past actions, such as that to improve progress in writing, have been successful. The role played by other leaders has developed since the last inspection but the school is right in identifying that this is work in progress, particularly in the light of the large number of staff changes. School self-evaluation is based on the regular checking of the quality of lessons, as well as the overall impact on pupils' progress. The importance of the individual underpins the school's approach to equality of opportunity. All pupils are enabled to take advantage of what the school provides. Gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils have reduced and the school continues to strive to maximise the progress of all. Where pupils are making slower progress than they should, interventions are planned and their impact monitored. The school is proactive in the way it uses partnerships to promote both pupils' well-being and education and the school's contribution to community cohesion. Strong partnerships with other schools, for example, have extended the pupils' knowledge of cultural similarity and difference. Shared working with a neighbouring school has begun to help to break down tensions that exist between two local estates. The school has, however, yet to formalise the way it judges and monitors the impact of its work in promoting community cohesion. School leaders are well supported by the governing body, who are part of the forward-looking school team. Governors are assiduous in the way they have checked aspects of school provision in order to be able to hold the school to account. They have played a good part in developing the outstanding safeguarding of pupils, which is evident in the vigilant procedures that ensure pupils are safe in school and in the development of the school's outstanding practice in supporting its most vulnerable pupils.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The school provides well for children in the Reception class. Good provision, including good teaching and a well developed curriculum, means that the children make good progress. By the end of the Reception year, many meet expectations for their age in the different areas of learning. However, there is a significant minority who, despite their good progress, do not reach this expectation. A key feature of the provision is the good balance between following the interests of the children while broadening their horizons and developing their language. For example, children engaged in independent play were challenged by an adult to talk about whether objects were heavier or lighter than each other. An 'Autumn walk' actively promoted the children's interest and encouraged them to look in more detail at their surroundings. Good leadership has enabled the improvement of the outside area, so that children now have as stimulating an environment outside as they do in. As in the rest of the school, the greatest care is taken of individuals. The way most children had settled in their first two weeks in school is evidence that they feel safe and is testament to the way adults build strong relationships with the children in their care.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage	
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## Views of parents and carers

The school enjoys the overwhelming positive opinion of the majority of parents and carers. Parents and carers particularly like the way their child is kept safe, the teaching they receive and that their child likes school. Inspection evidence supports these positive opinions. A tiny minority would like the school to pay more attention to their views. Inspectors found that the school listens to parents and carers and has, where appropriate, made changes as a result of their comments and opinions.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Knowle Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 283 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	58	48	39	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	59	48	39	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	64	52	52	43	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	51	53	43	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	54	53	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	52	53	43	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	41	63	52	7	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	52	43	59	48	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	52	52	43	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	46	57	47	5	4	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	47	54	44	7	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	52	53	43	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	65	37	30	2	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Knowle Primary School, Plymouth PL53QG**

We really enjoyed our time in your school and one of the highlights was discussing things with you. We think you are right to think yours is a good school.

Some of the things we liked best were:

- the good progress you make in English and mathematics
- the excellent contribution you make to making your school community run well and to improve
- the good teaching you receive
- that you understand that people can be different and live in different ways, but that each and every one is important
- the wide variety of activities that help you to enjoy school
- the way your headteacher, governing body and other staff try hard to make your school increasingly successful
- the way teachers and other staff take care of you and help you, especially when you are experiencing difficulties. We also liked the way you support each other.

To make things even better we have asked your school to:

- make sure that there is a good balance between the amount of time that teachers take talking to you and the time you get to practise what you have been taught
- help you to know how to improve your work in mathematics
- make sure that those of you who find your work a little easier are given challenging work during every part of each lesson
- improve rates of attendance. We think that your school parliament could help to find ways of doing this.

Thank you very much for your help and friendly conversations while we were at your school.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions

Lead inspector

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