

Knowl Hill CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109966
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	356659
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jennifer Armstrong
Headteacher	Pamela OBrien
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons taught by four different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 46 parents and carers were also considered.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How rapidly and consistently pupils make progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6, and the extent to which apparently slower progress in mathematics has an impact on the overall picture.
- How well staff use assessment information to plan work which challenges pupils, particularly those identified as gifted or talented, to make good progress.
- The effectiveness of the leadership of the school at governing body and middle-management levels.
- The extent to which the governing body has fulfilled requirements in relation to community cohesion.

Information about the school

Knowl Hill Church of England Primary School is a small village school, with four classes. Pupil mobility is significantly higher than in many schools. Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. A broadly average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The substantive headteacher, who was on maternity leave during the inspection, joined the school in January 2008, as did the acting headteacher.

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

This is a good school, which has improved significantly in recent years. It serves the needs of its community well. The school strongly promotes pupils' personal development. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and consistently behave well. Attendance has improved considerably and is now good. Parents and carers recognise that staff are highly committed to the school and its pupils. Staff successfully ensure pupils' safety and well-being, and provide effective pastoral support for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils feel safe and have great confidence in adults. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking exercise. Pupils' contribution to the school is good.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start and achieve well across most areas of learning. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 has improved and is now good overall, although slightly stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics. Progress in most lessons seen and in pupils' written work was good. Attainment by Year 6 is above average in English but remains broadly average in mathematics. However, standards in mathematics are now rising as pupils move through the school. Consistently good progress in reading and writing is firmly embedded because key literacy skills have been a focus in the last two years. Currently, targeted support for the most able older pupils in mathematics is actively helping to redress the balance through a school partnership initiative. The recently remodelled curriculum engages pupils' interests well.

Small class sizes, rigorous identification of needs, good specialist guidance and effective support staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make brisk progress. Pupils who are gifted or talented are making better progress because work is now more closely tailored to their needs.

Despite temporary changes in staffing, teaching and the use of assessment are mostly good. This is particularly the case in English, where there is some exemplary practice in marking and assessment. Individual target setting is good and has a positive impact on progress. In writing, pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others. However, despite robust tracking systems, staff have not always been sufficiently prompt and proactive in analysing data on pupils' progress in mathematics so that they respond rapidly to any dips in performance. As a result, assessment information is not always used well to match work accurately to individual needs and ensure that all pupils are challenged to do well in the subject. School leaders know the school well and self-evaluation is accurate. Although the governing body provides a good level of challenge as well as support, governance is satisfactory because community cohesion is not yet fully embedded. In particular, the governing body has not yet ensured that pupils have enough opportunities to engage with those from different backgrounds and cultures. The headteacher's robust vision for improvement, the school's inherent strength as a

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community and a convincing record in improving teaching and progress and in raising standards, together with embedded procedures for monitoring the school's work, all indicate that the school has good capacity to drive through and sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all staff maintain a high level of challenge in lessons in mathematics, so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress
 - staff analyse pupil performance data more promptly and rigorously, so information about the progress pupils are making is used to best effect when planning lessons.
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - developing meaningful links with schools and communities within the United Kingdom and internationally ? further extending pupils'
 - knowledge of cultures, religions and beliefs other than their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' skills on joining the school vary widely from year to year. As a result, attainment levels vary between year groups, but good learning was typically seen in the lessons observed and attainment was broadly average in the older age groups. English was a particular strength while mathematics was improving but still not as strong.

In a good Reception lesson, a high level of discussion between children and teachers supported effective learning. A group of children making 'smoothies' significantly extended their speaking and listening skills and their knowledge of types of fruit and of health and hygiene issues as a result of the high quality interaction and precise explanations of the adult. A challenging mathematics session in Years 3 and 4, where pupils were learning strategies for the multiplication of numbers with two decimal places, demonstrated growing staff confidence in the teaching of mathematics. However, in a mathematics lesson with Years 1 and 2 pupils, learning was constrained because the activities were not sharply matched to the ages or learning needs of the pupils. This meant that they did not learn as quickly or efficiently as in the better lessons.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic, respond well to challenges and work very well cooperatively. Good levels of staffing ensure that additional support is available in most lessons. The school council meets regularly, discussing current issues and organising fund-raising activities. The eco-council is an emerging strength and pupils are highly committed to its agenda. Older pupils willingly undertake community jobs. The role of playground 'buddies' has, however, fallen into abeyance, due to a dearth of clients! Pupils' contribution to the school and the local community is good. Spiritual, social and moral development is good, although opportunities for pupils to engage with diverse ethnic and cultural groups beyond the immediate area are limited. Pupils show great respect for each other and for staff and have good interpersonal skills. Together with improved basic skills, this means that they are increasingly well prepared for future study and later life.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Consistently good relationships and teachers' high expectations have had a positive impact upon pupils' learning and progress. Other strong features of teaching include the effective use of resources and the skilled preparation and deployment of support staff. Rigorous assessment in writing and reading and thorough analysis of data have ensured that activities are sharply matched to pupils' needs, although this is not yet such a strong feature in mathematics. Some assessment practice is exemplary, particularly in Years 3 and 4, underpinned by rigorous marking. Where progress is occasionally less secure, this is usually because planned tasks do not take sufficient account of the needs of pupils in different year groups or because the work is over-demanding, given pupils' prior learning. Most marking provides good guidance for pupils on the next steps in learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work.

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The curriculum supports the development of pupils' basic skills well, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils have found that recent changes to the curriculum offer a more creative experience, and are both engaging and motivating. While many enrichment activities successfully enhance pupils' learning, extra-curricular provision is limited at present. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is carefully planned and contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils mostly make good use of their writing skills in other subjects. External partnership activities contribute well to extending pupils' learning, particularly the specialist input in French and dance, and the provision for gifted and talented pupils in mathematics.

Staff care for pupils is good. They are highly responsive to pupils' needs and to those of their families. There is consistently good practice in supporting the health, social, behavioural and transition needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Transition arrangements are good. The school works closely with support agencies, particularly for pupils with specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high quality support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

School staff and leaders have worked effectively to address the weaker aspects of provision, driving improvement and supporting better learning and progress. A great deal has been achieved in setting clear guidelines for behaviour, improving attendance, ensuring pupils' safety, enhancing the accommodation, empowering the staff and improving provision and outcomes for pupils across the school. The comprehensive school development plan accurately identifies those aspects which need to be strengthened further, in order to sustain the school's well-established trajectory of improvement. The leadership team has a clear understanding of the immediate priorities, so that they can be achieved. The school is proactive in engaging with parents and carers. Middle management responsibilities have been clearly defined, so that all staff have a stake in, and are accountable for, the school's development. Well-embedded systems have, for example, ensured that the school continues to make progress even when key staff are temporarily absent.

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The governing body has made considerable progress, with new members, a more challenging culture and more strategic involvement in monitoring the direction of the school. Governors have an accurate view of the main issues facing the school and are ready to hold it to account. Statutory responsibilities are met. By visiting and carrying out checks, governors ensure that there is good, effective practice in safeguarding. Discrimination is tackled rigorously and the promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The school is a very cohesive community in itself. However, while an audit has been carried out and the governing body has ensured that community cohesion is effectively promoted in relation to the local community, it has not yet done enough to ensure that there are planned opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and communities in the wider national and international contexts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception from a wide range of pre-school settings. Entry levels vary considerably from year to year. In 2009 they were relatively low, but in 2010 they were higher than the levels expected nationally. Typically, children's skills and knowledge on entry are less secure in communication, language and literacy, particularly speech and language, than in other areas. Good induction arrangements, an aspect which the school has successfully developed, establish an effective bond with parents and carers and ensure that children feel safe. The high ratio of adults to children means that children are well cared for and build good relationships within the group. Children are happy and polite, behave well and engage confidently with adults and other children. Children quickly develop independence in their learning. Overall, they make good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, in language and communication and in creative development. Although mathematical development was a weaker element last year, the school has reacted promptly to increase the progress in that area. By the time they enter

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Year 1, children's skills and knowledge are broadly at the expected level for their age, but strongest in the key aspects of communication and in personal development. Children's skills in reading and writing are well supported by a systematic programme for teaching sounds and letters.

Focused, effective teaching ensures that children successfully extend and develop their skills. Sessions of direct teaching are well planned and provide good challenge, successfully meeting children's needs across the ability range. A good balance of activities chosen by children and those led by adults ensures that learning sustains a good pace. Children have good opportunities to make choices, both indoors and outside. The busy Reception classroom provides a stimulating learning environment. The outdoor area has been undergoing refurbishment. The provision of a covered area and the reorganisation of outdoor resources remain to be tackled. All areas of learning are planned for appropriately. Regular assessments provide good information on children's progress. The relatively new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has an increasingly good oversight of the strengths of the provision. The analysis of entry data provides basic information on children's prior learning, but staff do not make enough use of the resulting data to identify areas where provision and progress are more or less effective.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A very high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all are pleased with the school and the way in which it provides for their children. One said, 'An amazing school, where every child and parent matters. It is a joy to be part of school life.' Parents and carers greatly value the strong sense of community, the friendliness, the quality of care and the high level of commitment by the staff. A very small number of parents and carers indicated individual concerns, relating mainly to the effectiveness with which pupils' individual needs are met. The inspection team followed them up but found that provision for pupils with specific identified needs is a strength of the school, supported well by small class sizes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Knowl Hill Church of England 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	65	15	33	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	63	17	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	57	20	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	63	14	30	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	59	19	41	0	0	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)	24	52	21	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	59	15	33	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	59	16	35	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	59	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	67	14	30	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	65	15	33	1	2	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



17 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knowl Hill Church of England Primary School, Reading RG10 9UX

Thank you for making us so welcome during our visit. We were glad to have the opportunity to meet you and hear your views. We found that yours is a good school, which has improved significantly in recent years. These are the things we liked best.

- You work hard, enjoy lessons and behave well.
- You make good progress overall, particularly in English. Attainment is improving steadily.
- You undertake lots of jobs in school. You make a good contribution to the school and there are some links with the local community.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- You feel safe and secure, and know how important it is to eat healthily and stay fit.
- The curriculum is good and the school has worked hard to make it more interesting.
- School leaders set a clear direction and ensure that you are well looked after.

In order to help you do even better, we have asked the school to:

- raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that you get more challenging work in your mathematics lessons
- ensure that teachers carefully analyse all the information they collect, so that they know exactly how well you are doing
- establish meaningful links with other communities and faith groups within the United Kingdom and globally.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

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