

Knowle Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131292
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	381328
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Walker

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Mackay
Headteacher	Jenny Godsall
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
School address	Kixley Lane Knowle Solihull B93 0JE
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	26–27 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Walker

Additional inspector

Christine Bray

Additional inspector

Simon Griffiths

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 34 lessons and observed 16 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, staff, and groups of pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school improvement plan, the tracking system to monitor pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, and a sample of pupils' work. They also analysed questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 106 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It serves the expanded village of Knowle which is situated to the south of Solihull. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is made through the Nursery and Reception classes. The school provides a breakfast club which was included in this inspection. The privately run Early Birds Nursery is located on the school site but did not form part of this inspection. The school has recently undergone major building work to join the infant and junior buildings. The school has received the Eco-Schools Silver Award and has achieved National Healthy Schools status.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This outstanding school is high achieving and provides a very safe and happy environment. Standards have been consistently maintained at a very high level. The school has made substantial improvement to the quality of teaching and provision since the last inspection, when it was judged to be good.
- Pupils’ achievement is outstanding and by the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is well above average in both English and mathematics. Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most pupils continue through school making rapid and sustained progress in all subjects.
- Pupils’ behaviour is excellent. They feel very safe, are polite and respectful, and have very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and develop into friendly and considerate individuals. Attendance is well above average and reflects pupils’ real enjoyment of school.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding so that pupils make excellent progress. There is a very positive learning atmosphere in lessons and teachers have high expectations for all pupils. Although the marking of work by teachers is very helpful, pupils are not yet fully involved in the assessment of their own assignments so that they gain a clearer view of how to improve their work.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed. The headteacher has a precise understanding of the areas for development, including the performance and professional development needs of staff. Senior leaders and subject leaders provide high quality leadership of teaching and learning. All issues from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed and the school has been very successful in maintaining standards that have been significantly above average for the past six years.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage pupils to take a fuller part in the assessment of their assignments so that they know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that their children make excellent progress during their time at the school. The inspection found that achievement is outstanding across the school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly at the levels expected for their age although there is some variation from year to year. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make an outstanding start to their education because of the exceptionally well-planned provision and the high quality of teaching. Most children make excellent progress and enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are above the expected levels. Structured activities are having a significant impact on their personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills.

Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 make excellent progress in reading, because this is a key focus, and they read regularly in school and at home each day. By the end of both key stages, standards in reading are well above the national average. The majority of pupils are also making outstanding progress in writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is high in English and mathematics. Over half of Year 6 pupils gained at least Level 5 in their English and mathematics tests in 2011 and over a third of the pupils gained Level 6.

Pupils' current work and lessons show that the majority are making rapid and sustained progress in most subjects and reaching standards which are well above national averages. The school has been particularly successful in accelerating the progress of Year 3 boys in English through gender groupings, targeted support sessions and an additional emphasis on structured writing. Teachers are presently providing additional support for selected girls in Key Stage 2 in order to increase their confidence in mathematical calculation so that they can gain the higher levels in their work.

The well-developed tracking system and range of intervention strategies are used exceptionally well to identify and support any pupils who are at risk of underachieving. The school is presently providing considerable additional support, such as booster classes in numeracy and literacy for small groups of pupils in most year groups. Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their peers because of effective additional support from teaching assistants which helps them overcome barriers to learning and take part in lessons with the other pupils. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic

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backgrounds also make outstanding progress.

Quality of teaching

Much of the teaching is outstanding and it is never less than consistently good, with the result that the pupils are making exceptional progress. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that their children are taught well and pupils agree. The supportive atmosphere in lessons and excellent quality of planning ensures that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Lessons involve a range of interesting activities so that pupils display great enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. Teachers make sure that the activities are very well matched to the different abilities of the pupils which greatly helps their excellent progress. Displays in classrooms provide a stimulating environment for learning and celebrate pupils' work. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils who require additional help with their work. Marking is supportive in helping pupils with their next steps in learning although teachers do not always involve them in the assessment of their own work.

All pupils have daily periods of literacy and numeracy, and this aspect of the curriculum greatly supports the teaching of basic skills. Teaching in the school actively supports the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to think about and express their own beliefs and values as seen in the Year 5 work on African slavery and the Year 6 work on the caste system in India. Outstanding teaching was seen when teachers challenged their pupils with high quality questioning and tasks as well as encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. This often led to greater engagement and accelerated progress for pupils. For, example, Year 6 pupils made rapid progress when they were set the task of working out the formula for the surface area of their newly constructed cuboids and then explaining their findings to the rest of the class. Similarly, skilful questioning by the teacher supported Year 3 pupils to confidently explain their art work to the rest of the class whilst fully engaging the other pupils in the learning process.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils is excellent and this contributes to an ideal atmosphere for learning and personal growth. The vast majority of parents and carers are highly positive about behaviour in the school. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school, and this contributes to a calm and orderly environment. In lessons, pupils consistently meet the school's expectations and, typically, pupils respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are highly proficient in managing their own behaviour in lessons and around the school. For example, pupils could be trusted to work on their own, move around the corridors and go out to play with minimum supervision. Pupils are considerate, polite and courteous to staff and each other and this has a very positive effect on learning. They make every effort to ensure that the other pupils learn and flourish in an atmosphere of respect and dignity.

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Although bullying of any kind is extremely rare, pupils, parents and carers say any unkind behaviour, such as teasing and name calling, is dealt with quickly and effectively. All class groups are actively engaged in supporting the school's anti-bullying policy and pupils are very aware of the different forms of possible bullying such as cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to sex, gender, race and disability. Teachers and other adults take good steps to ensure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to thrive in an atmosphere of fairness and trust, and without fear. Every pupil feels valued as an individual even in a larger than average sized school. Pupils feel very safe in the school and display an excellent understanding of the issues relating to safety. They talk confidently about how they would keep themselves safe in a variety of situations such as using the internet and crossing the road.

Leadership and management

The headteacher demonstrates outstanding leadership so that staff work very closely on the shared vision to gain the very best academic and personal outcomes for all pupils. The senior management team provides excellent support for the improvements in the school. Rigorous systems of monitoring teaching and tracking pupils' progress are responsible for the improved standards in literacy and numeracy. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive working document with clear actions and targets which are particularly focused on improving pupils' progress. Professional development is a key focus in the school so that teachers are continually reflecting on their practice in order to improve the quality of learning further in their classes.

The governing body is well informed of the school's progress and areas for development. Its members are fully involved in monitoring progress and in holding the school to account. They have been very active in supporting the new buildings for the school. Robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. There is a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. For example, the school analyses in detail the performance of different groups in the school and ensures that any gaps in attainment are narrowed through intervention and support.

The school has developed an imaginative curriculum which is highly relevant to pupils' needs and provides an exciting range of enrichment activities. For example, visits including those to Ironbridge, Bosworth and Dudley Zoo provide effective enhancement for the curriculum as well as theme days such as a 'Taste of Africa' and the 'Second World War Day' which greatly increase pupils' enjoyment and experience of school. The school makes excellent use of the environmental area and school grounds to support learning which is acknowledged by the Eco-Schools Silver Award. The broad range of experiences within the curriculum contributes very well to pupils' achievements and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils gain confidence and self-esteem, develop excellent social skills and a genuine respect for each other. The school is very active in developing their awareness of different

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cultures through links with an inner city school in Birmingham and frequent multicultural activities such as the 'Caribbean Day'.

There are very positive relationships with parents and carers who strongly engage with their children's learning and the work of the school. There are high attendances at parent consultation meetings and curriculum workshops. The excellent leadership of the school, the impressive record of pupils' achievement, the rigorous systems of tracking pupils' progress and the commitment to continuous improvement indicate that this school has demonstrated an outstanding capacity to improve.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knowle Church of England Primary School, Solihull, B93 0JE

Thank you for making us so welcome and for sharing your views with us during the inspection and through your questionnaires. We greatly enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you during assembly, at playtime and lunch. Your school is an outstanding one which has made significant improvements since the last inspection. We know that your parents and carers are very supportive of the school and value the education provided for you. There are many positive things about your school.

- You enjoy school, attend regularly and work hard in your lessons.
- You make excellent progress in your subjects and attain well above average standards.
- You are exceptionally well behaved and feel very safe in the school.
- You are considerate, respectful and courteous to staff and each other.
- Your teachers provide a range of interesting activities which engage and challenge you.
- Your school concentrates on both your academic and personal development.
- Your school is exceptionally well led by the headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body.

The headteacher and staff are always looking at ways to make your school even better so we hope you will continue to use the school council to put forward your ideas for improvement. We have asked your teachers to encourage you to take a fuller part in the assessment of your assignments so that you know exactly what you have to do to improve your work. You can help by examining the marking schemes in the subject areas and working out exactly what you have to do to ensure that your work is at the highest level.

We trust that you will continue to work hard, behave well and benefit from the range of opportunities in your school. We wish you every success in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker
Lead inspector

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