

Knowle DGE Learning Centre

Leinster Avenue, Bristol, BS4 1NN

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Knowle DGE Learning Centre has made good improvements since its last inspection and it has developed many innovative features.
- The quality of teaching has improved, through the appointment of specialist subject teachers.
- The school has developed a 'nurture class' where pupils with more challenging social and emotional needs are taught in small groups, which improves their behaviour, attendance and achievement.
- The newly established sixth form is good. It enables students to remain in full-time education successfully, where previously many had dropped out of college courses.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for a wide range of on-site vocational courses such as construction, motor vehicle repairs and land-based activities.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Many pupils make vast improvements in their behaviour and attendance.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is encouraged well. For example, a group of five pupils travelled to Kenya to gain first-hand experience of different cultures and traditions, which made a deep and lasting impact upon them.
- Senior leaders and governors have successfully improved the quality of teaching through appointing good staff and adapting the curriculum well to meet the needs of the changing school population.
- The school provides good opportunities for both primary and secondary aged pupils to be educated in mainstream schools, which helps to develop their self-confidence well.
- The school works exceptionally well with other professionals to address difficulties that hinder the learning of pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is mainly good and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- On occasions the pace of learning is not rapid enough and learning is too passive. Overall lesson objectives are not always made as clear as individual objectives for students in some lessons.
- Attendance has improved markedly, but there is still more to do.
- Teachers do not always check closely enough how well some pupils are working with other adults.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 11 lessons, some being observed together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior leaders of the school, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View), but the inspection team considered the school's survey of parents' and carers' views.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's records on pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks, staff questionnaires, development plans and information relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Frank Price	Additional Inspector
Dr Ann Maddison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Knowle DGE Learning Centre educates pupils who have a range of learning difficulties, including moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, and those with speech and language communication needs.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding allocated by the government for certain groups of pupils, in this case, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who are looked after by the local authority), at approximately 81%, is higher than average. Six Year 7 pupils are eligible for catch-up premium.
- Fifteen pupils are in public care.
- The school moved to new premises in 2010. There is also a hostel provision, providing short-term residential stays for pupils, which was not inspected at this time.
- In September 2011, the school opened a sixth form provision.
- The school operates two inclusion bases, one at Oasis Connaught Primary School. Secondary aged pupils attend Brislington Enterprise College.

An investigation into the use of restraint/restriction of liberty at the setting

Inspectors were aware during this inspection of an investigation into serious allegations about restriction of liberty at the setting. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching to further raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring learning is more active to improve the pace of lessons
 - making sure objectives for the lesson are shared with pupils, so that they understand the purpose of the lesson more clearly
 - ensuring teachers check more closely the learning of those pupils who are working with other adults in the class.
- Further raise pupils' attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress has improved strongly over the last three years. Currently most pupils make at least expected progress and a growing number make better than expected progress.
- A good number of more-able students are undertaking GCSE courses and are on track to gain creditable results in English and mathematics. To give students the best chance of succeeding, the school does not enter them early for examinations.
- Sixth form students gain further qualifications in academic subjects and are prepared well for their next stage of education. The sixth form provision has been very effective in keeping students in full-time education.
- Learning in lessons is good. Pupils learn well in lessons and become keen to engage in learning. For example, in an English lesson, students were motivated through the use of a video clip of an inmate on death row to give reasoned views in support of, or against, the death penalty.
- Those pupils who have more severe behavioural, social and emotional needs have been helped to improve their progress through the specialised provision of a nurture group, which provides a good balance of emotional support and academic expectation.
- Due to pupils' often fragmented previous schooling, many pupils arrive at the school with poor reading and literacy skills. Due to the systematic approach to literacy across the school, there has been a rise in literacy levels across all key stages. In conversation with inspectors, a number of pupils said how much their enjoyment and confidence in reading had improved.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding make similar progress to other pupils. This funding has provided further support for pupils' literacy needs and additional help in lessons. This has enabled them to close the gap between their attainment and that of their peers in English and mathematics.
- The achievement and progress of different groups of pupils is good, including those with moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication needs and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- A number of pupils are educated in either a separate primary or secondary school and this gives them good opportunities to develop their personal, social and academic skills.
- Older students have outstanding experiences in a wide range of vocational subjects. They are able to try different activities and gain accredited qualifications in motor vehicle maintenance and construction.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, so that now it is good. One of the reasons for the improvements in teaching and pupils' progress is the use of specialist subject teachers. This is beginning to have a positive impact in science.
- While teaching is typically good, not enough is outstanding. Sometimes teaching is too mundane and there is not enough active learning to motivate pupils.
- A lot of work has been done to improve the use of Learning Facilitators (other adults working with pupils) to ensure that they support the learning of pupils effectively. Although this has been achieved, on occasions, teachers do not monitor closely enough how well these pupils are doing when working with other adults.
- The marking of pupils' work in books and comments to help them improve their work are thorough and consistent. Pupils are very clear what targets they are working towards and teachers set a high level of expectation for the standard of work that pupils produce.
- Teachers have learned to adapt to the changing needs of pupils in the school. Teaching is strongest when they use practical exercises to motivate pupils and this leads to effective exploratory work and good levels of both discussion and written work. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils worked in pairs to carry out an experiment to measure reaction times

to see if there was any correlation between these and the height of students. There was a buzz to learning and students were able to problem solve.

- Pupils are given individual learning targets for each lesson. However, the use of overall lesson objectives is inconsistent and this means that pupils' learning, and the understanding of the lesson by the class is not as clear or sharp as it could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour and attitudes of most pupils are generally good in lessons and around the school. There are some pupils who try to push the boundaries, but over time, the behaviour of pupils improves significantly.
- Over the last three years there has been a reduction in the use of fixed-term exclusions. Attendance of pupils has also risen sharply. One of the reasons for this is that the school operates its own transport, which provides better consistency of staffing and has also resulted in much improved punctuality of pupils. The school recognises that attendance is still below average and that there is further work to do on raising pupil attendance rates.
- The student council is very positive about the school. They like many of the subjects they are taught and stated they trust staff and like the level of support they receive in class. They clearly understand the behaviour system and like to work hard for rewards. They appreciate the vocational and work experience opportunities. One pupil said, 'We are challenged here.' The school council has made suggestions for improvements, such as Year 10 and Year 11 students being allowed out at lunchtimes and selection of school uniform, which have been implemented.
- The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is promoted well. For example, pupils enjoy serving and working in the school's 'cafe Kenya'. This is a mature and pleasant sociable area. The recent trip to a school in Kenya by some pupils was life changing and strong links have been built between the two schools.
- The school is vigilant in tackling any form of bullying and homophobic bullying. Where these incidents happen, pupils are involved in 'restorative justice' where after a period of reflection they meet the person to apologise. A number of pupils are involved in peer-mentoring schemes, which has contributed to fewer incidents and greater respect for their environment.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils attending the alternative provision are secure.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team and governing body have provided effective strategic leadership and secured a state-of-the-art building, which enhances teaching and learning superbly.
- The headteacher and senior leaders provide visionary leadership and management. They have developed a number of innovative aspects since the last inspection, including the sixth form provision, the on-site vocational centre and residential provision.
- The school runs smoothly and whole-school meetings, which focus on tackling concerns that may impede pupils' progress, are addressed well. Other agencies such as the police, health professionals and educational psychologists work closely with the school to address problems both inside and outside of school. This in turn ensures that pupils are in a better frame of mind to learn.
- The planning for future school improvements is thorough. The school carefully evaluates its work. The work of the school is checked by senior leaders, governors and the local authority. The key issues for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled well and the school has improved and adapted well to meet the different needs of pupils that the school now caters for.
- The school offers a wide range of subjects and experiences tailored to meet pupils' needs. More-able pupils are being stretched through the use of higher level examination courses.
- The performance of teaching staff is carefully monitored. There is a suitable match between the

pay of teachers and their performance and weaknesses in teaching have been tackled well. This has secured good teaching and learning across the school. Teachers are given clear feedback on their teaching, to give them both confidence and areas for improvement.

- The pupil premium and additional funding for those pupils in Year 7 has been spent appropriately to provide additional support in literacy and in pupils' social and emotional development. Consequently, it has enabled them to keep pace with the rest of the pupils in school.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are secure, although some documentation contained in the staff handbook is not detailed enough.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school, which has helped to improve teaching and learning. Helpful advice has been given to governors to help them carry out their role more effectively.

■ **The governance of the school:**

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- Governors are supportive of the school. They know the strengths and areas for improvement accurately as they are well informed through a range of information, which is supplemented by their regular visits to school. They provide challenge both to the headteacher and senior leaders. They have enough information and training to enable them to understand the school's assessment information. They have provided good strategic management and have been active in appointing subject specialists to improve teaching and pupils' achievements. They know how teachers' performance is checked and have made sure that the link between pay and quality of teaching is appropriate and that promotion within the school is carefully considered. They know what pupil premium funding has been spent on and the impact it has made. Governors have received suitable training and have attended courses on safeguarding, health and safety and pupils' progress data. They make sure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109392
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	401050
Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	8–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Hopper
Headteacher	Peter Evans
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 May 2010
Telephone number	0117 3532011
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