

# Knowle Primary School

Ringmore Way, West Park, Plymouth, PL5 3QG

**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' progress and achievement in English and mathematics are not yet consistently good. This is especially the case in writing.
- In 2013, not enough Year 6 pupils made more progress than would normally be expected from their starting points in Year 3, in both reading and writing.
- There is not enough good or outstanding teaching to make sure that all pupils make good or better progress.
- Lessons are not always planned to allow pupils, particularly the more able, to work independently, thinking and learning for themselves.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils have time to respond to their advice when their work has been marked.
- Pupils are not always expected to assess their own work, and that of other pupils, against the learning intention of the lesson or their own target to help them recognise when they have been successful.
- Leaders and members of the governing body do not have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing when it is judged against other schools nationally. The school's self-evaluation is inaccurate and lacks rigour.

### The school has the following strengths:

- Although the school was previously judged to be good, and standards have slipped, it is currently improving. Action taken by school leaders, through better teaching, is improving progress and closing the gaps in performance between different groups of pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well because the provision is good. This provides them with a good start to school life.
- School leaders work extremely hard to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Procedures to support pupils and their families are highly effective. The significant number of pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the Reception Year are welcomed and integrated quickly, reflecting the highly inclusive values at the school.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. Their attitudes towards learning are good. They enjoy their lessons and behaviour around the school is good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons, observing 14 teachers. These visits included observations of groups of pupils learning phonics (linking letters and sounds). An inspector also visited the Early Years Foundation Stage to inspect the teaching. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined inspectors for a number of observations.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at examples of pupils' work to find out how well they learn, including the work of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including school improvement plans, priorities for development, achievement information and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.

## Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Barrett

Additional Inspector

Marian Marks

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Knowle is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes. Almost all pupils are White British, with very few pupils from different ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged groups of pupils including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- The school failed to meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2013.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage or leave before they transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 6 is well above average.
- The school manages a breakfast club for pupils and the 'Sunshine Club', a separate early morning club for those who benefit from a nurturing start to the school day.
- A privately managed pre-school is situated on the school grounds but is inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to good or better to increase pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, particularly in writing, by ensuring that teachers:
  - plan work for pupils, particularly the more able, that requires them to think and learn by themselves in order to develop their independent learning skills
  - provide pupils with regular opportunities to review and improve their work using the feedback teachers write in pupils' books after they have been marked
  - plan lessons to include opportunities for pupils to assess their own and other pupils' work against the learning intentions and individual targets to help them recognise when they have been successful
  - consistently apply strategies to further develop pupils' basic skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality and accuracy of school self-evaluation by ensuring that leaders and governors are able to use the data available on pupils' achievement more effectively to judge how well the school is performing when compared to other schools nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In 2013, pupils' achievement and progress in reading and writing in Year 6, from their different starting points in Year 3, were below expectations. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 was below average.
- Since the previous inspection, too few pupils have exceeded the expected rate of progress by the end of Key Stage 2. This has been more noticeable in English, and especially in writing. However, following programmes to improve achievement in reading and mathematics, one has now been introduced to improve writing. Inspection of more recent progress data and a scrutiny of current pupils' work in their books indicate that similar progress is now being made in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check, equalling the national average in both 2012 and 2013, reflect the successful introduction of a phonics programme to support the teaching of reading and writing. This is having a strong impact within the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, with pupils' progress in reading improving. Pupils are very confident readers and are able to use the phonic sounds well. They said that they like reading a wide range of books. However, attainment in reading is still below average both at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- When children join Reception, their skills and knowledge are generally well below what would normally be expected for their age in all areas of learning. Children respond well to the good teaching and interesting learning activities they are given, and make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, while some reach average levels of attainment in some areas, generally they are still below average when they enter Key Stage 1.
- School leaders have tackled weaknesses in mathematics since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement has improved. Pupils are given opportunities to apply their basic skills in problem-solving situations. Pupils in a Year 6 class were using food packaging to measure and work out surface areas of the package.
- The school's records show that, for all groups, pupils' progress is similar and now strengthening, particularly in mathematics. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who join the school at other times.
- The gap in performance at the end of Key Stage 2 between those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding and their peers has closed significantly in mathematics from one year behind in 2012 to only six months behind in 2013. However, in reading and writing, the gap remains similar at just over one year behind, despite improving slightly.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not been sufficiently strong enough over time and therefore requires improvement. Consequently, teaching is not good enough to help pupils make good progress.
- Lessons are not always delivered to reflect the wide range of abilities that are in each class. Often, there is too much time taken where pupils have to work together with an adult as a group rather than being given opportunities to think and learn by themselves, restricting the rate of progress for some pupils, especially the more able, as the pace of learning is too slow for them.
- Teachers provide pupils with clear learning intentions. Pupils use these to help them understand what they have to achieve. However, they are not given enough opportunities to assess their work by themselves or to use their peers to check their work for them. This is limiting their ability to judge if they have been successful and how much of the work they understand.
- In the better lessons, learning is good because pupils are challenged to take risks. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are clear about what they have to do, with a focus on the basic skills in literacy and numeracy that are developed to improve learning. Year 4 pupils were working together to research the character they are writing about and demonstrated their ability

to understand the text well by transferring the information into their writing. However, this is not always the case and basic skills are not always developed well enough, or taught in isolation, restricting pupils' ability to apply these skills to their work.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and diligently, providing useful 'next steps' to help the pupils to improve their work. In some cases, pupils respond to these comments and show improvements in their work. However, this is not always the case and often these comments go unused by the pupils as they are not always expected to review and improve their work. This is further limiting their ability to think and learn by themselves.
- Teaching assistants are fully included in the planning of lessons and support pupils well, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and ensures that children make good progress. Teachers make effective use of the outside and inside spaces, using resources well to promote children's development towards the early learning goals.
- All parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire said that their children were taught well at the school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and have positive attitudes to learning, particularly when the work is engaging and challenging.
- The school provides an extremely high level of support and care for all pupils which is valued highly by parents, carers and the pupils. Staff are passionate and wholly committed to provide the highest level of care, with a focus on ensuring the pupils are safe, secure and happy.
- Behaviour around the school is good and pupils demonstrate respect for each other, their teachers and other adults at the school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including emotional, physical and cyber-bullying. Most parents, carers and pupils report that behaviour is good and that any occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour would be quickly addressed by staff who would rapidly resolve any incidents or problems pupils might have. Visits to the playground during the inspection confirmed that behaviour outside is good.
- In most lessons, behaviour is good. However, very occasionally, there is some inappropriate behaviour such as chatting to each other or losing interest in the task. This is usually because the work provided by the teacher is not appropriately demanding for the individual pupil, but any unacceptable behaviour is quickly identified and corrected by teachers.
- All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied about the way that the school cares for and looks after their children. All pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say they feel safe and very secure. Pupils who join the school at other times than the norm were quick to say how much the school welcomed them and how easily they fitted in.
- Attendance is improving as a result of some effective work with parents and carers to impress the importance of regular attendance at school and the impact on achievement. Some pupils attend the breakfast club, and the more supportive 'sunshine' club, which provides a good start to school for pupils, especially those who may find the experience difficult.

### **The leadership and management** require improvement

- The headteacher and governors have an understanding of the issues relating to the quality of teaching and the effect this has on pupils' achievement at the school. However, they do not have a clear understanding of how well the school is performing, particularly when it is compared to other schools nationally. Their assessment of the school in the self-evaluation was

inaccurate and was not rigorous in its findings. This has led to some misconceptions about how good the school actually is and consequently, standards slipped following the previous inspection.

- All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire are highly supportive of the school and the way that it is led and managed. The headteacher is passionate about providing pupils with the highest quality education, demanding high standards from staff, a vision shared by all staff and governors. There is a sharp focus on improving pupils' life chances and the relationships that the school has with parents and carers is strong and supportive.
  - There are appropriate plans to improve pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills, led well by experienced subject leaders. To date, more rapid progress has been made in reading and mathematics than in writing. Staff are united in their support for change and improvement, a culture developed through the 'Striving for Excellence' project focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced. Cross-curricular work is encouraged with a single writing book to develop literacy, especially writing skills. The school is currently planning a full review to coincide with the new National Curriculum being introduced next year.
  - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for very well through the curriculum and other activities, such as assemblies and visits. Encouraging pupils to reflect society with the roles within the 'School Parliament' helps them to develop their understanding of the democratic process, so developing their moral and social skills well.
  - Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the areas of concern in the previous inspection. They have secured some improved teaching, and pupils' attendance has risen following some concerted effort to highlight the benefits of regular attendance with parents and carers. These improvements indicate the capacity to sustain further improvement.
  - The school is working with a local secondary academy to use the primary sports funding to provide increased sports provision in order to increase participation by the pupils. Working with other local schools, they have accessed some specialist physical education teaching that is helping to build the skills of the teachers at the school to ensure future sustainability.
  - The headteacher has managed the performance of teachers well, and has challenged them to improve their teaching and leadership responsibilities. There is a sharp focus in the setting of targets for teachers on the outcomes for pupils they teach and areas within the school they lead. Outcomes of the performance reviews are linked to pay progression.
  - Leaders at all levels share a determination to avoid discrimination and ensure equality of opportunity for all. There is still more to do on this by ensuring that any gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils across subjects are eliminated.
  - The light-touch support provided by the local authority demonstrates its confidence in the leadership at the school.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are committed, support the school well, and undertake training to improve their effectiveness. They have a clear understanding of the need to support the headteacher in her quest to improve and challenge the performance of teachers in their teaching as well as in their leadership roles. Governors ensure that the link between performance and salary progression is challenged effectively. Governors monitor funding to the school well and they check the impact of initiatives as compared to the cost. They are clear about the need to use the pupil premium funding to improve the outcomes for pupils. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. Governors monitor how well pupils are doing at the school and evaluate the impact of developments within the improvement plan on pupils' achievement. However, they are not clear about how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. Consequently, governors are not providing the sharply focused challenge to the school as the school self-evaluation is inaccurate and does not correctly reflect the school.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113277
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	426842

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

<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>	325
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev David Bailey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judy Milford
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5–6 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 365364
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