

Inspection of Knowle Primary School

Ringmore Way, West Park, Plymouth, Devon PL5 3QG

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school, and rightly so. Leaders encourage pupils to celebrate their personal achievements. Pupils enjoy school. Parents describe the school as being at the heart of the community.

Leaders are ambitious and have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the carefully selected books they read. They know the importance of being a good reader.

Pupils are respectful of staff and each other. They know right from wrong. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Pupils and parents say they can speak to any adult at the school and know they will provide support if necessary. Pupils say they feel safe. One pupil described staff as being their 'guardians', a feeling shared by their classmates.

Staff know pupils well. Leaders have designed a curriculum that supports the development of pupils' personal skills, as well as their academic knowledge, well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities beyond the curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Teachers regularly check that pupils know and remember the sounds that they learn as they develop their reading. This means pupils who need additional support to catch up are quickly identified. Staff work with these pupils to give them extra support that they need to practise their phonics. This is helping these pupils to begin to read with increasing accuracy and confidence. Children in the early years enjoy a wide variety of books, rhymes and songs. This helps them to develop their phonics skills well.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of books to introduce them to different writing styles. Older pupils practise their writing regularly. Pupils' work shows that they can write in a range of styles well.

Pupils are well supported to use subject-specific vocabulary. This helps pupils to develop their learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 can use mathematics resources to identify and name different types of shapes.

Staff break down the curriculum into small steps. This helps pupils to remember key concepts. In addition, the curriculum is well organised, so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills well. For example, children in the early years learn the names of animals, while pupils in Year 6 use this previous knowledge to learn about evolution. In history, pupils are able to order important events in time. Pupils use historical vocabulary well and this helps them to understand key concepts.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Their additional learning needs are accurately identified and met. The knowledgeable special educational needs and disabilities coordinators (SENDCos) support teachers to help pupils with SEND well.

Positive relationships with all staff, and carefully selected activities, support pupils' personal development well. For example, pupils from Years 3 to 6 lead and organise lunchtime sporting activities. Some pupils attend the school's nurture provision and outdoor learning activities. There, pupils are supported well to develop their social and emotional skills, such as turn-taking, listening to others and not giving up.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils who attend the behaviour club say they learn not to repeat inappropriate behaviour. Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. They enjoy playtimes together and move around the school calmly. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly.

Pupils are keen to attend school. However, some pupils need extra support to get to school regularly. The family support worker works well with parents to overcome barriers that are preventing their children from attending school. Leaders know that working with parents is helping families improve their children's attendance.

The local governing body is effective. Governors and trustees support and challenge leaders in equal measure. This helps to support school improvement. Staff say they are well supported to manage their workload.

Careful questioning by teachers helps pupils who need extra help in English, mathematics and science. However, subject leaders are exploring ways to check what pupils know and remember in other subjects. This work is at an early stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of care in the school. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Pupils are placed at the centre of every decision regarding their safety and care. Leaders, including the family support worker, are tenacious in their pursuit of appropriate support for pupils and families in need. Staff appreciate the work of the school well-being champion. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

Safeguarding record-keeping is accurate and up to date. Recording methods and communication between staff is strong.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders for foundation subjects recognise that the approach to assessment needs further work. Systems for checking what pupils already know and remember in some subjects are not as precise as they could be. This leads to

some pupils not learning the breadth of the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that systems for checking what pupils know and understand provide subject leaders with the information they need to improve the curriculum further.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school [here](#).

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145653
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10193270
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Butcher
Headteacher	Cameron Lancaster
Website	http://www.knowle.plymouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Knowle Primary School joined the Learning Academies Trust in April 2018.
- School leaders opened a new, onsite Nursery in May 2019.
- There have been many changes to staff and the local governing body.
- A new early years leader, early years SENDCo and SENDCo were appointed in September 2020.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- At the time of the inspection, there were no 'bubbles' closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The inspection team did deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, science and history during the inspection. Inspectors met with school leaders and curriculum leaders, carried out lesson visits, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors met with the SENDCos to consider the provision for pupils with SEND. They also met with designated safeguarding leaders to consider how well they identify, help and manage pupils.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered responses to the pupil and staff online questionnaires and Ofsted Parent View, including 14 free-text responses.

Inspection team

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