

Inspection of Knockhall Primary School

Eynsford Road, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9RF

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel safe in school, and most are happy. In early years, in particular, staff help children to develop positive routines and habits. This creates a focused and cooperative atmosphere for learning. Leaders make it clear that bullying is not tolerated. As a result, pupils are confident to speak out if they are worried about it. Pupils enjoy having their successes recognised. Being entered into the 'golden book' is highly sought after.

Staff have high expectations for pupils, but these are not enacted consistently across the school. Teachers use 'big bang' days to spark pupils' curiosity and imagination. These experiences are supported by relevant, interesting and diverse books. However, some learning for pupils is not mapped out clearly enough. This limits how much knowledge pupils build up over time. Among older year groups, there are some instances of poor behaviour, which at times, disrupts lessons.

There is a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer to pupils. They enjoy growing and selling vegetables as part of the garden committee. Assemblies, including guest speakers such as professional athletes, encourage pupils to be positive and persevere.

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

Leaders make sure that all pupils follow a broad curriculum. Learning is ordered sensibly in some subjects and builds towards clear aims by the end of key stage 2. This enables pupils to develop their knowledge well. However, in other subjects, leaders have not specified where pupils need to get to in their learning. This means that staff are not clear enough about what pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Furthermore, teachers do not always design learning which addresses the most important knowledge. Occasionally, work does not enable some pupils to develop more complex thinking. Teachers build a clear picture of pupils' learning over time in most subjects. In mathematics, for instance, there is a systematic approach to correcting misconceptions. In early years, staff are skilled at working out what children understand and what they need to do next.

Leaders rightly recognise that reading is a key priority for the school. Phonics teaching starts strongly in Reception, and children are enthusiastic about reading stories. Across the school, the books pupils read are matched carefully to the sounds that they know. However, staff do not always check whether all pupils understand what they are reading. There has not been a consistent approach to supporting weaker readers. As a result, some pupils use less effective strategies such as guessing at words. This holds these pupils back from becoming fluent readers.

Overall, most pupils achieve well across the curriculum. However, disadvantaged pupils achieve less well than their peers. Over the course of this year, leaders have made substantial improvements in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, these pupils benefit

from effective strategies to support them in class and beyond. In early years, all children are prepared well for the next stage of their learning.

This year, leaders have implemented a new behaviour system. Pupils and staff are generally positive about this. Some staff report that pupils' behaviour still disrupts lessons. Suspensions have reduced noticeably this year as a result of leaders' actions. Many pupils show a positive attitude to their learning and are polite and welcoming. Staff help children in early years learn to persevere and sustain their concentration. Many disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are absent from school too often. This holds them back from achieving as well as they should. Leaders and governors recognise the scale of this issue. Along with the trust, they are developing strategies and links with families to address it.

The programme for pupils' personal development is planned clearly and delivers a broad range of experiences. Pupils build and retain an understanding of different faiths and cultures. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to debate and explore issues such as stereotyping. In early years, staff make sure that children develop the communication and social skills they need. There is an emphasis on diversity and tolerance threaded through the reading scheme. This approach is mirrored in curriculum areas such as history and geography.

Staff welcome and value the professional development that leaders provide. Leaders seek staff feedback about how to keep workload manageable. In light of staff turnover and vacancies, some staff feel that workload is still an issue. Leaders are building connections with the local community. They have set up a uniform bank and bring in guest speakers from local faith groups. Governors and trustees ensure that leaders fulfil their statutory duties. Executive leaders recognise the need to make further improvements at Knockhall. They are directing resources to support this, such as providing training for new subject leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training for staff about the risks that pupils might face. This helps to ensure that staff are watchful and confident to report concerns. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about looking after their safety online and in real-life situations. When pupils need access to help from external safeguarding partners, leaders take swift actions to secure that this happens. Leaders also provide effective support within school if pupils need it. Pre-employment checks for staff are completed, and governors make sure that this is checked frequently. Leaders have clear systems to manage any potential concerns about staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not have a sufficiently detailed sequence

or clearly defined end points. As a result, teachers do not set tasks that enable pupils to build cumulatively sufficient knowledge. Leaders must ensure that the knowledge that pupils need is carefully sequenced and mapped out clearly across all year groups.

- Teachers do not consistently check whether pupils have understood the work set, either in lessons or in reviewing work. As a result, pupils can develop misconceptions or lack precision in the work that they produce. Leaders must make sure that all staff are trained to assess pupils' understanding and to adapt their teaching accordingly.
- In subjects where the curriculum is not as securely planned, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to explore difficult concepts. As a result, some pupils do not develop a deep understanding in their thinking. Leaders must ensure that in all subjects, teachers ensure that pupils encounter appropriately challenging knowledge and concepts.
- Leaders have not made sure that weaker readers have had consistent and frequent support. As a result, too many of these pupils do not close the gaps in their reading. Leaders must make sure that support for weaker readers is an absolute priority and that it is delivered to a high standard.
- The attendance of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged is too low, and too many of these pupils are persistently absent from school. As a result, they are missing out on critical learning, and many find it hard to keep up when they are back in school. Leaders must ensure that the attendance of these pupils improves and that persistent absenteeism is tackled effectively.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

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	145014
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10268285
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louise Wolsey
Headteacher	Tiffany King
Website	www.knockhallprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has experienced substantial turnover in staff, including senior and middle leaders, since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in January 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also met with representatives from Woodland Academy Trust
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, English and physical education.

- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also sampled pupils' work from a range of other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's single central record and files relating to safeguarding cases and spoke with staff, pupils, governors and trustees.

Inspection team

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