

INSPECTION REPORT

Knaphill School

Woking

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125000

Headteacher: Mr G Oakley

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Morley
25470

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th May 2000

Inspection number: 215558

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Knaphill Woking Surrey
Postcode:	GU21 2QH
Telephone number:	01483 888899
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Bedford
Date of previous inspection:	October 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Knaphill School attracts most of its pupils from the village of Knaphill. This school site and the infant school site are linked by playing fields. The main building dates from 1938 but further buildings have been added to accommodate a rising roll.

The school serves a stable community, and few pupils join or leave other than at the usual times of admission or transfer. With 312 pupils on roll, it is a larger than average school, and pupil numbers have grown steadily over recent years. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds, but for the majority the socio-economic background is a favourable one. Eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This proportion is below the national average. Sixteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is below average. Just over 2 per cent of pupils have statements of special needs and this is above the national average. Pupils from homes in which English is not the first language spoken are thinly represented in the school and, of these, none is at an early stage of language acquisition. Data from previous years show that the attainment of pupils as they enter the school at the start of Year 3 is consistently above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Knaphill School is a good school. It builds on the high standards in English, mathematics and science with which the pupils enter. By the time the pupils leave the school at age eleven, the standards in all these core subjects are very high, albeit with writing a slightly weaker element. Pupils in all classes are eager to learn. They have a mature and responsible attitude to their work and behave very well both in and out of the classroom. The quality of more than three-quarters of the teaching in the school is good or better, and the headteacher and key staff provide leadership of a very high quality. Although the school has an income that is a little above average, it provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are very high.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in more than three-quarters of lessons.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. He is well supported by a significant number of staff, and their combined skill in monitoring the school's performance is a particular strength.
- Pupils are eager to learn, behave very well, and relate very well to one another and to their teachers.
- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum for its pupils.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The strategies adopted to raise the standard of pupils' writing.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the Local Education Authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing the five key issues from its last inspection in October 1996.

To raise achievement of the more able pupils, setting for English and mathematics has been introduced throughout the school. There is now a register of more able pupils and a club that seeks to address their social and emotional needs in addition to their intellectual ones. This action has had a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. To address the previously unsatisfactory standards in music, the school has appointed a music co-ordinator, introduced a new scheme of work, and provided all staff with appropriate training. Additionally, there is now a purpose-built music room. Standards in music are now good.

A staffing policy has been introduced, and the management structure has been reviewed and is now functioning effectively.

Using detailed advice from the local authority, the school has made appropriate adjustments to the criteria it uses for placing pupils on the special needs register.

The school has been unable to respond to the final key issue: it has submitted bids to the local authority and elsewhere for funding to equip an area as a medical inspection room but, to date, has been unsuccessful.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	A	B	<i>well above average</i> A
Mathematics	A	B	A	C	<i>above average</i> B
Science	A	B	A	B	<i>average</i> C
					<i>below average</i> D
					<i>well below average</i> E

For the past three years, the standards achieved in national tests have been consistently above or well above average when compared with those of all schools nationally. They have been in line with or above average in comparison with those of schools in which a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. In 1999, the proportion of pupils in English, mathematics and science who achieved standards higher than the national target of Level 4 was well above the national average, and this is a particularly positive feature. The year-on-year improvement in the average points scores for the school is broadly in line with the national trend.

Inspection findings indicate that the school is maintaining these high standards. The proportion of pupils likely to achieve the national target of Level 4 in English, and the proportion likely to achieve the higher level, Level 5, is well above the national average. Standards in English are very good overall, but writing is, relatively, a weaker element. The proportion of pupils likely to achieve the expected level and the higher level in both mathematics and science is very high. In relation to these anticipated results, the targets for 2000 set by the school for achievement in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are modest and are likely to be exceeded.

Standards in information and communication technology and in religious education meet expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to learn. They concentrate very well, even when asked to work independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, both in and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work and play well together and relate very well to all adults in school.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils' real eagerness to learn is evident throughout the school. They take a very responsible attitude to their work, and collaborate well or work hard independently, as appropriate. Relationships are built on mutual respect. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work as they complete it, although the way in which it is then compiled and stored over the year is sometimes disorderly. This is not helpful to teachers, pupils or parents who may wish to look back on the work in either subject or chronological order. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good, there is very little evidence of late arrival, and all lessons begin punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good. Of the teaching observed, 4 per cent was of the highest quality, 31 per cent very good, 42 per cent good and 23 per cent satisfactory. There are no significant weaknesses, but several strengths. The very thorough planning which precedes each lesson gives teachers a clear focus to their work. Teachers make it equally clear to pupils what it is they are to learn. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace, and expectations of pupils' concentration, contribution and work rate are always high. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and support an environment which gives pupils every opportunity to learn.

Setting in English and mathematics, combined with a clear understanding of the standards pupils achieve, enables teachers to provide well for all abilities.

The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in English and mathematics lessons. There are good opportunities in other subjects for pupils to develop numeracy skills, but missed opportunities in many other lessons inhibit their potential to build on standards of literacy, particularly of writing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and varied curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school is quick to identify these pupils. It provides well for the needs of both the most and the least able. All make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The school provides well for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and very well for their moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know and care for their pupils well.

The school interprets the national curriculum imaginatively and provides pupils with structured, stimulating and challenging experiences. This allows them to achieve high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science, to make an early start to learning French, and to benefit from a rich variety of additional activities, including school clubs and annual residential visits. The curriculum does not always allow pupils to achieve their full potential in writing, although the work they do produce is still of a good standard. The school knows its pupils well and caters for their physical and emotional needs as well as their intellectual ones. It monitors their performance carefully and is successful in providing a curriculum, which offers a good level of challenge to pupils of all abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and key staff provide very clear direction for the work of the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors are effective in supporting the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school reflects critically on its work. A particular strength is the rigorous and realistic way in which the school monitors its own performance. Its capacity for further improvement is good.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and key staff. Governors are supportive, albeit with limited knowledge of the schools' strengths in some areas. Relationships amongst the staff are good and there is a clear commitment to continued improvement. Most staff have a good understanding of standards in the school. There are fair and rigorous systems in place for the headteacher and senior management team to monitor the quality of teaching, and a growing number of additional staff are acquiring the skills necessary to enable them to do the same in their own subject area. This is a key strength of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of the pupils. • The quality of teaching. • The way in which the school is led and managed. • The contribution of the school to pupils' personal development. • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity and nature of homework. • The arrangements for keeping parents informed about their child's progress. • The closeness of the working relationship between home and school.

Inspectors support all the parents' positive views of the school. In relation to their concerns, the school rightly encourages parents to support their children through a regulated system of homework. The school has canvassed the views of parents on homework and responded accordingly. It pays due regard to the quantity and complexity of homework provided, and is responsive to concerns when they are brought to its attention. Parents have high expectations, and the school works very hard to meet these. Parents do not always make use of the time before the school day begins or after it closes to discuss their concern on an informal basis with the class teacher, or to make an appointment for a more formal discussion.

There is a sufficient number of parents' evenings where parents have an appointment to talk with the class teacher, though the school does not always ensure that these conversations cannot be overheard by other parents or pupils.

The school provides parents with adequate information and has a good working relationship with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards in English, mathematics and science are very high.

1. Pupils achieve standards in English, mathematics and science which are well above the national average. Inspection findings broadly confirm the most recent national test results, in which much higher proportions of pupils than average achieved the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5.
2. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above average, and the school builds systematically on these throughout the four years. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught through English and mathematics lessons, and pupils have good opportunities in other lessons to develop their numeracy skills. Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in lessons other than English are more limited and, as a result, these skills are not fully developed. That is not to detract, however, from the overall quality of pupils' writing which is still good.
3. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed. Pupils are confident speakers, keen to express themselves and articulate when they do so. They have a wide vocabulary - including subject specific technical vocabulary - relative to their age. A Year 6 pupil, for example, correctly described as 'phlegmatic' a character in the book he was reading. Pupils enter their classrooms ready to listen to their teacher, and the initial attention they pay as the learning objective is shared with them helps them to understand and absorb all that follows.
4. Skills in reading are also very good. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils read with fluency and good expression. They are used to responding to challenging questions about what they have read, and all exhibit good levels of understanding, relative to their potential.
5. The standard of pupils' writing is good, but this is significantly the weakest element in pupils' work. Basic writing skills are well taught in literacy lessons, but the pupils then have limited opportunities to *use* the skills they have learned in a range of extended writing activities. There are two main contributory factors. Firstly, opportunities to write at length are not sufficiently well implanted into the planning and teaching of other areas of the curriculum, and there is scant evidence that the pupils' writing grows in length as they progress through the school. Secondly, close scrutiny of pupils' work over nearly a full school year reveals a tendency for teachers to use worksheets requiring single words or simple sentences, when a 'from scratch' writing opportunity would have been more beneficial.
6. Skills in numeracy are very good. The introduction of the national numeracy initiative has resulted in additional emphasis on mental agility, quick mental recall, and the ability to explain a range of ways in which it is possible to solve a problem. This has had a positive impact, and pupils' skills in numeracy are very good.

7. The least able pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils of average ability work comfortably with ratio and proportion, while the most able pupils investigate mappings. Throughout the school, pupils use their skill in estimation well to judge whether their answer is likely to be correct. Skills in scientific investigation are well developed. Pupils' technical vocabulary is very good. Year 4 pupils, for example, talk of upthrust and gravity in relation to their practical work on floating and sinking, and Year 6 pupils name and explain the processes of pollination and photosynthesis. As they progress through the school, pupils develop their understanding of the principles of fair testing. They achieve very good standards in all areas of the science curriculum.

The quality of teaching is good or better in more than three-quarters of lessons.

8. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. Of the 26 lessons observed, 77 per cent was good or better, of which 31 per cent was very good and 4 per cent excellent. 23 per cent of the teaching was satisfactory, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching.

9. Throughout the school the basic skills of numeracy are well taught and well developed through other areas of the curriculum. Literacy skills are also well taught but there remains scope for their development through channels other than literacy lessons. Technical vocabulary is encouraged and this leads to its use by pupils as a matter of course. A good example is that of pupils in Year 6 who, having read a passage from 'Goodnight Mr. Tom', were quick to draw their teacher's attention to simile and metaphor.

10. The quality of teachers' planning is exceptionally good. The time and effort currently needed to produce planning of such quality is considerable, but the school is wisely translating it into a series of booklets which can then be used year on year and updated as necessary. While these booklets are being compiled, pupils continue to reap the benefits of their teachers' hard work.

11. Expectations are very high but teachers are skilled at matching work to ability. The least able pupils are well supported by other adults. This support is predominantly in the classroom but, where it is most appropriate, pupils are withdrawn for individual support on a structured reading programme. The most able pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work.

12. As each lesson begins, teachers share the learning objective with the pupils in their class. This is almost always a very positive feature. On the few occasions when it is not, it is because the teacher has failed to translate the objective for the lesson into a form that really means something to the pupils. One example of this was in a Year 6 literacy lesson, where the objective was 'to write a synopsis of a text, deciding on priorities and relevance'. During the plenary session at the end of lessons, where learning is reviewed and reinforced, teachers always refer back to the intended learning. This allows pupils to reflect upon and evaluate their own progress, with the result that, throughout the school, pupils have a good awareness of the level of their learning and of the progress they are making.

13. Teachers expect from pupils, behaviour, concentration and contribution of the highest quality. This is almost always easily achieved because the school has been so successful in fostering a very good work ethos. On the odd occasion when pupils do not live up to these expectations, teachers are quick to intervene with strategies that bring pupils back on track without undue reprimand.

14. Classroom support staff are efficiently and effectively deployed. On almost all occasions time is used very well. Lessons begin punctually and progress at a brisk pace. During the summer term pupils leave their lessons in small groups for swimming lessons. This is usually organised with a class-based activity which can be left and then picked up again without difficulty, but it was not the case in one Year 5 classroom where the parallel lesson was science.

The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. He is well supported by a significant number of staff, and this combined skill in monitoring school performance is a particular strength.

15. The headteacher and key staff have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. A particular strength of the headteacher's management is a commitment to - and success in - extending this awareness to all staff. As a result, curriculum co-ordinators have an unusually realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject. They discuss with colleagues the most effective ways of raising attainment, implement strategies likely to bring that about, and evaluate the success of what they have done.

16. The headteacher recognises the need to provide all teachers with the skills that will allow them to carry out monitoring activities for their subject in a manner which is likely to raise standards of pupils' work. This includes monitoring the quality of teaching. One successful strategy for extending his own skills to his staff is the joint observation of lessons followed by discussion. The reports on lessons observed are rigorous, uncompromising on quality, and accepted by staff as a helpful and necessary part of the drive to improve.

17. The school has good capacity for further improvement. In this it is well served by the good working relationships, the teachers' willingness and ability to reflect critically on their practice, and their hard work and vision for improvement in the areas for which they are responsible.

Pupils are eager to learn, behave very well and relate very well to each other and to their teachers.

18. Pupils throughout the school are eager to learn. They enter the classroom ready for the activities of the day and sustain their interest and motivation until they go home. Their enthusiasm is strongly supported by their teachers, who always tell pupils what it is they will be learning in a lesson. Hence, pupils own knowledge of their learning is a very positive feature. Behaviour is very good both in the classroom and around the school. For example,

pupils work independently of their teacher without the need for reminders; they move sensibly from one place to another and make lunchtime a pleasant social occasion. There is evidence of respect between teachers and pupils in every classroom. Pupils have responsibilities such as maintaining the library shelves in good order, and helping with art materials and with simple office duties. Older pupils act as judges for whole school competitions. Pupils understand and willingly accept that the need to accept responsibility grows with age.

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum for its pupils.

19. The school offers a wide range of worthwhile opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils. The setting arrangements for English and mathematics which operate throughout the curriculum help to achieve effective teaching of both literacy and numeracy, though opportunities in other lessons are not effective in helping pupils to achieve their potential in literacy.

20. The curriculum does, however, make worthwhile links in many areas. Examples are the simultaneous covering of the geographical and historical aspects of London, and using a 'pond dipping' visit linked to work in science as a stimulus for written work in literacy.

21. Extra-curricular opportunities are exceptionally good. There is an annual residential visit for each year group, and an exciting and varied range of clubs in which all staff are involved. These include Choir, War Hammer, Paper Craft, Paper Planes, Music, Art, Chess, Computers, Gymnastics, Netball, Football, and Junior Aerobics. A club has been set up to support the most able pupils in the school, and a 'Level 6 Club' caters for those pupils at the upper end of the school who could benefit. A weekly French lesson is timetabled for every class. All these provide a range of worthwhile, challenging and fun-filled activities.

22. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and this has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Spiritual and cultural provision are both addressed well, although opportunities for all pupils to reflect on what they are told are not always made sufficiently explicit, for example in school assembly.

The school cares well for its pupils.

23. The school is a caring and stable environment. The issues of the availability of first aid, provision to record accidents, and adequate lunchtime supervision, all mentioned in the last report, have been fully resolved. Pupils are well known by teachers, who are responsive to them and who value them as individuals. They are well supported throughout the day, and the tidy, well kept environment indicates a well considered level of care. Routines are firmly established, and the school has effective links with outside agencies. The health and safety of pupils is regularly evaluated. Teachers assess pupils' work very effectively in English, mathematics and science and use the results efficiently to guide what they do next. Assessment in other areas of the curriculum is embryonic but is being addressed within a realistic time scale

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The strategies adopted by the school to raise the standard of pupils' writing.

24. The school recognises that amongst the good and very good standards it achieves, writing is a weaker element. That is not to say that writing is weak. It is not. Standards of writing in the school start – and remain – above the national average. However, the school is rightly trying to improve these standards, and the school development plan explains clearly the action it is taking. This action is likely to make some impact on the standards of writing, but there are two features of the school's current practice that inhibit a more rapid improvement and on which the school is not currently working.

25. Firstly, there are not enough planned opportunities throughout the school - and in lessons other than literacy - for pupils to use the writing skills that are effectively taught in their daily literacy hour. There is little evidence of pupils having regular opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. This is linked to the second feature, which is the overuse of worksheets. These frequently rely on pupils completing them with single words or, at best, a few sentences and their use reduces the opportunities for pupils to write 'from scratch' and to develop the skills associated with doing so.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

26. The school should now:

- Add to its initiatives designed to improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - * increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum, particularly the opportunities for them to write at greater length;
 - * reducing the proportion of writing opportunities which are dependent on the completion of worksheets.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	31	42	23	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	312
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	50

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	43	32	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	33	37	40
	Girls	30	29	32
	Total	63	66	72
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	84	86	96
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	25	32	36
	Girls	27	29	30
	Total	52	61	66
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	69	81	88
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	2
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

**Qualified teachers and classes:
Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23 : 1
Average class size	26

**Education support staff:
Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	547 553.00
Total expenditure	531 341.00
Expenditure per pupil	1 704.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	65 582.00
Balance carried forward to next year	81 794.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	312
Number of questionnaires returned	76

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	39	11	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	54	8	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	61	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	50	28	2	0
The teaching is good.	36	55	0	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	40	32	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	38	15	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	46	5	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	18	50	28	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	36	55	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	56	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	39	3	0	0