

INSPECTION REPORT

KNOWLE CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Knowle, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 131292

Headteacher: Mrs Pat Preedy

Reporting inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy
23158

Dates of inspection: 5th – 7th February 2001

Inspection number: 230870

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kixley Lane
Knowle
Solihull

Postcode: B93 0JE

Telephone number: 01564 776209

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Lynda Mackay

Date of previous inspection(s): July 1996 (Junior) February 1997 (Infant)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Knowle Primary was formed in 1997, following the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools. The school is much larger than others of the same type nationally, catering for 528 boys and girls aged between three and 11. There are 467 full-time pupils and another 61 attend the school's nursery on a part-time basis. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, is much lower than the national average and all are fluent speakers of English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need (2 pupils) is below the national average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. Overall, there are similar numbers of boys and girls, but some year groups (Nursery to Year 2) have significantly more boys than girls. Although assessments of the children when they begin school show a very wide spread of attainment, overall, standards on entry are average. Knowle has been designated a Beacon school¹. It has a very good reputation locally and there is strong demand for places. A number of successful admission appeals by parents have resulted in some very large classes, particularly in the juniors.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstandingly successful school, with strengths in all areas. Throughout the school, very good teaching promotes effective learning for all pupils and results in them achieving very high standards by ages seven and 11. Pupils' personal development is also well catered for and culminates in well-rounded children who are good to know and talk to. The school's many strengths are underpinned by excellent leadership and management from the headteacher. Other senior managers, governors and staff support the head very well, forming a united team that is working hard for excellence. The school deserves its Beacon status. Parents and taxpayers get very good value for the money invested in the school.

What the school does well

- Exceptionally good teaching results in pupils making very good strides in their learning and achieving very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well, with very good opportunities for them to gain independence, self-confidence and knowledge of their learning.
- Pupils really enjoy school, attend regularly, behave very well and take pride in their work.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and creatively organised so that learning is challenging, fun, and thoughtfully planned to meet pupils' specific needs.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership and management skills permeate all aspects of the school's work and ethos and are pivotal to its success.

What could be improved

- Aspects of annual reports to parents on children's progress could be more informative.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection as a primary school following the amalgamation in 1997. However, the separate inspections of the junior and infant schools (in July 1996 and February 1997 respectively) were under the leadership of the present headteacher ('acting headteacher' during the junior inspection) and under her leadership all the key issues for improvement from both inspections have been tackled very successfully. Eleven-year-olds' previously below average standards in art and design and physical education (PE) are now exceeding the expectations for their age. Standards in English, mathematics and science have also risen significantly during the last four years, particularly in the juniors. Higher

¹ A school that has been identified as amongst the best performing in the country and represent examples of successful practice.

attaining pupils are now challenged very effectively and assessment is used very well to help teachers plan work to suit all pupils' needs. Carefully defined management roles have been implemented for staff, with each individual playing a specific part in promoting pupils' academic and personal development and supporting school improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	A*	A*	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A
science	A*	A*	A*	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This is an impressive set of results, with standards in all three subjects regularly located in the top five percent of schools nationally. The school has held this strong position for three years and, although not obvious in the table, standards have also risen during this time, keeping pace with the national upward trend. In particular, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of pupils achieving at levels higher than those expected of 11-year-olds. Boys' standards in writing have also risen significantly. This improvement is not the result of co-incidence or chance, but of planned and purposeful measures taken by the school to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. A similarly positive picture is also evident in the infants, with seven-year olds achieving very high standards (again in the top five percent nationally) in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

By the end of their time in the reception year, most children achieve the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning, and many exceed these. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are exceptionally able, achieve well. This is because they are provided with a very good curriculum that is taught extremely well. Moreover, every child's progress is regularly monitored and tracked to ensure each has the right opportunities to succeed.

The school's high expectations are evident in the challenging targets it sets. These are met because the positive ethos, where everyone's effort is valued, is one that breeds success. The high standards represented in national test results are also found in other subjects. In particular, much has been invested in new technology and pupils are making great strides in learning in this subject and achieving above average standards by age 11. Achievement in art and design is also strong, with a good range of very high quality drawings, paintings and sculptures evident throughout the school. In PE too, many pupils are developing good co-ordination and creative skills, both in specific PE lessons and the Fit for Learning sessions that punctuate each day.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils come eagerly to school and have a thirst for learning. They participate enthusiastically in lessons and other activities provided.

Behaviour, in and out of	Very good. The school is a calm and orderly place and pupils have very
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classrooms	good levels of self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils work very well together. They mature into children who are keen to accept responsibility and who mix easily with each other and adults.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is much better than is found in most other primary schools and punctuality is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very 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 extremely high with no significant shortcomings in any aspect. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and 80 per cent was very good or better, which is much higher than is usually found. These high standards were evident throughout the school and in all subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively, both in specific lessons for these subjects and within other subjects. Teaching and learning are so successful because teachers have very good knowledge of the things they teach, hold high expectations of pupils and are absolutely clear about what they want pupils to learn and how they will go about it.

Teachers use a wide range of methods to capture pupils' interest and promote their progress. A very successful feature is the emphasis teachers give to accelerating learning by tailoring questions, explanations and activities to pupils' preferred learning styles. They make sure pupils understand the purpose of work and involve them fully in the process of learning; all lessons include an element of independent work where pupils make their own decisions about how to conduct tasks. Another strength is how teachers ensure that separate, yet linked, work is set for pupils of different attainment. Because of this, pupils work at tasks that are very well matched to their capability, which promotes learning very well. From day one at the school, pupils build knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate. They put much effort into all they do and the insight they gain into their own learning styles supports their very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Excellent. Whilst maintaining an appropriate emphasis on the basics, pupils have very good opportunities to study, in-depth, a broad range of subjects. All abilities are well catered for and creative organisation ensures that planned physical activities punctuate each pupil's day adding variety, fun and a welcome 'brain break'. More than this, the curriculum is designed to foster pupils' all-round development into confident and independent learners.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The needs of pupils are well met. Work is meticulously planned to allow them to succeed and they often benefit from additional adult support. Their learning proceeds at a very good pace.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision allows pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals who appreciate beauty in the world around them, know the difference between right and wrong, interact well with each other and adults and value and respect peoples' differences.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils are well looked after. There are very effective systems to check on and promote pupils' academic and personal progress.
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The curriculum meets the legal requirements of the National Curriculum and expectations for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception). At lunchtimes and after school, all teachers give generously of their time to run an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. This is the foundation upon which all other strengths are built. The head leads from the front and has been successful in forming a united team of staff and governors. There is a singular drive for improvement and excellence that has pupils' learning and all-round development at its heart.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors provide valuable support and have grown well into their role of critical friend. They ask the right questions at the right time about standards and the quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Senior managers know exactly what works well and what requires improvement. This is because there are rigorous systems and procedures to gather information about strengths and weaknesses that lead to very effective action to secure improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Finance, staff, resources and time are all used in an extremely efficient way to support pupils' learning.

The governors and headteacher pursue the principles of 'Best Value' very effectively in all the decisions they make.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress and become mature and responsible. • Children's good behaviour. • The good quality of teaching. • The approachability of teachers and the head. • The school's high expectations of children. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about their children's progress (annual reports were mentioned and discontent about the curtailment of the autumn parents' meeting). • More extra-curricular activities for infant children.

The inspection team has no hesitation in agreeing with parents' positive views, indeed, the things that parents like are often very good or excellent rather than just good! The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is well thought out and soundly based. The team cannot contest the school's philosophy on this; all pupils eventually have very good opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities outside of lessons. Reports to parents do have some shortcomings. However, the school had already noted these and has firm plans to make improvements. The school feels that changes made to the timing of parents' consultation meetings will improve communication, but plan to take parents' views into account before any final changes to policy are made.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Exceptionally good teaching results in pupils making very good strides in their learning and achieving very high standards in English, mathematics and science.

1. The quality of teaching is very good for all pupils. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and 80 per cent is very good or better, with almost 20 per cent being excellent. This is much better than is usually found. Throughout the school, but particularly in the juniors, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Moreover, it is very clear that this high quality teaching is not just reserved for inspection week. The analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and provide work that is demanding, stimulating and very well matched to their different needs. Teachers' planning is well thought through and supports effective learning. They are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and plan lively and interesting explanations and activities that grip pupils' imaginations and encourage them to work hard and achieve well. A good example was in a Year 6 literacy lesson where pupils were challenged to identify fact from opinion in separate texts arguing for and against capital punishment. Pupils then worked collaboratively, in small groups, providing reasoned arguments for the views they would express in the debate that followed.
2. All aspects of teaching that are deemed to be the most important in promoting effective learning are evident in lessons, including high quality teaching of literacy and numeracy. Of particular significance, however, is the firmly held philosophy, backed up by practice, that *every* pupil can be a successful learner. Teachers are not only highly knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, but also about *how* pupils learn and the various approaches needed for pupils with different learning styles. This takes the quality of teaching to a level that is rarely seen. To this end, teachers modify their lesson plans and tailor questions, demonstrations and activities to enhance learning for all. Moreover, from their earliest days in school, pupils are given opportunities to plan and organise aspects of their own work and are taught the skills to do this effectively. There are numerous examples of this in many subjects and in all year groups. For instance, at particular points in the day, nursery and reception children make decisions about the activities they will work at, thereby developing personal and social skills alongside knowledge and skills in other areas. One small group of reception children showed remarkable concentration as they worked continuously for almost an hour, and for the second day running, on building elaborate models from 'recyclable' materials, showing increasing dexterity, care and creativity in cutting and joining techniques. Year 3 pupils, preparing to write a descriptive account of the main character in their story, made use of a range of planning methods to record their thoughts and ideas and to organise their writing into paragraphs. These included bullet points, columns, word-webs and charts. Similarly, Year 6 pupils used different coloured markers and symbols to help them locate specific aspects of the texts they were studying and also provided a key on the text as an organising device. Although there are examples such as these in many schools, the difference at Knowle is that this independence and highly effective teaching and learning occurs in virtually every lesson and for every age of pupil. Teachers create a 'can do' learning environment where pupils feel that they are able to tackle anything successfully because they are taught strategies for doing so and know that their efforts will be valued.
3. It is clear that the exceptionally high quality of teaching pupils receive throughout their time at the school is a significant factor in the very high standards they achieve in the National Curriculum tests and assessments. Although a significant minority of children each year enter the school with higher than average standards, a similar proportion has below

average standards, whilst the remainder display the expected level of skills and knowledge. From this mostly 'average' starting point, therefore, the achievement, at age 11, of standards in English, mathematics and science that are in the top five percent of schools nationally, in addition to being well above average in relation to similar schools, is a very notable accomplishment. Regardless of their prior attainment, all pupils build knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate. The momentum of learning is maintained at a consistently rigorous pace so that all pupils, including those who are 'more-able' and those who find learning more difficult, make very good progress. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when higher attaining junior pupils were not making as much progress as others.

4. Since 1996, the test results of 11-year-olds in English, mathematics and science have shown significant improvement. Many more pupils now achieve the higher levels (Levels 5 and 6) and, in particular, there has been a significant rise in boys' standards of writing. None of this has occurred by chance, but as a result of very good teaching and excellent management strategies to promote improvement.
5. By age 11, pupils' highly developed reading skills provide very good support for their learning in a range of subjects as well as enhancing their enjoyment of the written word. Advanced reading skills of inference and deduction are well developed. For instance, after only one reading of an unseen text, pupils were able to make very perceptive comments about how the author used words and strategies to engage the reader and evoke emotional responses. Pupils' own written work is mature and reflects their skills in planning, structuring and developing different types of writing. Characters and situations are unfolded imaginatively and dialogue is used effectively to dramatise interpersonal features of quite complex plots. Paragraphs are used intelligently and pupils show skill in thoughtfully selecting vocabulary to create imagery and hold the reader's attention. In mathematics, pupils show agility in manipulating numbers mentally and make very good use of what they learn about numbers, patterns and relationships to solve problems. They understand that the process of finding the answer is as important as the answer itself and there is an industrious buzz of excitement as pupils rise to the challenge of exploring and explaining mathematical phenomena. Underpinning the high standards in science is the clear emphasis given to experimental and investigative work, which is taught very well and permeates all lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils think up their own questions to investigate, design fair tests, make detailed predictions of outcomes, select their own materials and write up the results of work using a variety of styles.
6. By age 11, standards are also high in other subjects. For example, pupils have gained very good ICT skills and use these productively to support their learning in other subjects. Two good examples linking ICT with literacy were seen in Year 2. Pupils used a word processing program to compose letters to a local Member of Parliament and adjusted a prepared text by using the tool bar to change the appearance of nouns, verbs and adjectives. In Year 6, mathematical skills were being developed alongside ICT skills, as higher attaining pupils worked independently on 'Future School', a program that allows them to work on individually challenging mathematics assignments. The high standards achieved in this subject are also the result of very good teaching. Throughout the school, all teachers are highly competent in using and teaching ICT and are well supported in this by capable and skilled technicians.
7. Since the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in 11-year-olds' standards in art and design and PE, both of which were below national expectations. Achievement in both of these subjects is now high and standards are exceeding those that are expected of pupils this age. A good range of very high quality drawings, paintings and sculptures are evident throughout the school. In PE, pupils develop very good co-

ordination and creative skills, both in specific lessons and in the Fit for Learning sessions that punctuate each day. Year 6 pupils' skills in controlling balls are highly developed, as is their ability to critically evaluate their own performance and suggest ways to extend and improve their work and future lessons.

Pupils' personal development is promoted extremely well with very good opportunities for them to gain independence, self-confidence and knowledge of their learning.

8. The school is highly successful in developing well-rounded pupils who are good to know, thoughtful of others and conduct themselves well. Learning is not just about subjects and standards, but also about what makes worthy and reliable people. The school's ethos is one that allows pupils to thrive, both socially and academically.
9. Teachers provide very good role models for promoting pupils' moral and social development. They know their pupils well and engender excellent relationships with and between them, showing genuine appreciation for their efforts. For example, at the end of many lessons teachers thank pupils for their input. Consequently, pupils identify easily with members of staff and this gives a very harmonious atmosphere to learning. Teachers place great demands on pupils in terms of their capacity to work together to solve problems, find information or make and test predictions; opportunities of this nature are seen in all lessons. However, teachers' high expectations are realistic and do not pressurise those pupils who are less confident. Indeed, teachers' very good understanding of pupils' different learning styles and personalities influences how they group pupils so that, for example, those who are less confident are supported by others. Pupils rise very well to the challenges provided. They are happy to work collaboratively, benefiting from and appreciating each other's talents. Even when no adult is nearby they maintain very good concentration and effort.
10. The school is committed to ensuring the academic and personal development of all pupils and implements accelerated learning techniques, including the Fit for Learning programme, to this end. To promote learning, teachers assess pupils regularly, not only in terms of academic performance, but also in relation to personal and social development. Pupils are also involved in assessing their own performance, which, together with the thoughtful and detailed feedback from teachers, gives them a very good insight into their own learning. Pupils talk openly about the things that they and others are good at, and are not afraid to admit to areas of weakness. They know their targets for improvement and feel they are fully involved in helping to set these. Pupils are expected to become independent learners, organising and taking responsibility for aspects of their work. They are taught the skills to do this and become increasingly competent as they get older. Pupils value the element of choice provided in lessons where teachers frequently allow pupils to make the decisions about how to tackle tasks. They understand that a method that works well for one person may not necessarily be as useful for another. From the time they begin school, pupils are taught to use a wide range of techniques to plan or record their work. What is extraordinary is that as pupils get older they use these techniques instinctively to support their learning in a range of subjects, without direction from teachers. A good example of pupils using their organisational skills is in relation to the fifteen-minute Fit for Learning sessions. Junior pupils change quickly into appropriate clothing, organise their books and resources for the lesson that follows the session, and move briskly and sensibly to the hall or yard ready to begin. Afterwards, they waste no time in changing back into their uniform, settle quickly and are alert and ready to begin work. These personal skills, which the school is so effectively promoting, will equip pupils very well for the future, both in secondary education and in life.

11. Pupils' sense of citizenship is very effectively developed within a variety of activities and initiatives. For instance, through business links established for each year group, pupils' involvement in supporting charities and good causes and within the school council. The school council provides pupils from each year group with regular opportunities to represent the views of their peers and to have a say in how the school is run. The headteacher and a governor always attend these sessions, guiding pupils through the protocol of formal meetings and allowing them to discuss issues important to them. Pupils are thus able to hear and understand the school's viewpoint and work with the management to decide upon the action to be taken. During the inspection, pupils raised issues and debated the implications of a range of topics that included

- whether the school could be involved in the Blue Peter Stamp Appeal;
- whether or not Year 6 could use gel pens; and
- the possibility of having the dinner menu written on a board each day in the dining room.

These regular meetings help pupils develop an awareness of the need for consensus in a community and give them an understanding of the systems and procedures used by formal committees, for example, by taking and agreeing minutes.

12. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop personally. The Christian ethos of the school impacts powerfully on the development of their spiritual understanding and moral codes. Personal and social education lessons provide scope for pupils to talk about social and moral issues pertinent to their own lives and that of the local and world community. The school's provision helps pupils develop very well as people who care, share and give generously of their time and effort to help others. The programme of visits outside of school to museums, galleries, theatres and other performances contributes much to pupils' social and cultural development. In addition to the strong links with the local Christian church, pupils also have very good opportunities to find out about and celebrate the rich contributions made to society by people from different cultures.

13. At Knowle, pupils make great strides in their development as people and are themselves the proof of the school's success in this area.

Pupils really enjoy school. They attend regularly, behave very well and take pride in their work.

14. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are confident and well-motivated learners who take a keen interest in lessons. They arrive punctually each day and their attendance rate is much higher than the national average. Lessons are epitomised by pupils' thirst for learning. They listen attentively to teachers, and when questions are asked or their opinions sought, hands shoot up showing their eagerness to be involved. Pupils also listen carefully and respectfully to each other. For example in numeracy lessons when they explain to their classmates how they tackle mathematical problems, in science lessons when they suggest different ways to test out hypotheses and in the numerous instances of collaborative work. Pupils clearly value the many opportunities provided for them to organise and control aspects of their learning. This is evident in the extended periods of concentration and effort they give to the tasks set. Similarly, the high standards of presentation of work in all subjects reflects pupils' pride and care in all they do and their appreciation of being given 'ownership' of their work. These positive attitudes support learning very well. Pupils' enthusiasm also overflows into the lunch hour and extends beyond the end of the school day, with many being eager to participate in the wide range

of extra-curricular clubs and activities on offer, many of which are over-subscribed.

15. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is very good. They respond very well to the school's high expectations in this area and have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not. Pupils are polite, patient and considerate. In lessons, despite the many opportunities for collaborative work, there is very little loud talk or abuse of this freedom to work without direct supervision by teachers. Even at playtimes, though behaviour is sometimes boisterous, relationships remain harmonious and there is a good sense of companionship between pupils of all ages.

The curriculum is rich, varied and creatively organised so that learning is challenging, fun, and thoughtfully planned to meet pupils' specific needs.

16. Despite the strong emphasis on pupils achieving high standards of academic excellence, the school is not an examination factory. Excellent attention is given to ensuring that the curriculum contains all the necessary subjects and aspects and that the all-round education of pupils is assured. The school has maintained a sensible balance between the time allocated to developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and those of other subjects. The curriculum forms a single unit in which literacy and numeracy skills are also practised in other subjects and ICT is used as a tool to extend learning across the whole curriculum.
17. Curriculum planning is meticulous. Schemes of work for all subjects provide a very good structure to ensure pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are systematically developed as they get older. Teachers make very good use of these when preparing shorter-term lesson plans. These clearly identify what teachers intend pupils will learn and how they will go about achieving their objectives. Moreover, the plans include clear criteria against which learning will be assessed so teachers can evaluate how successful they have been. The results of assessments are recorded and teachers use the information very well to modify future lessons, either for all pupils or for groups, so as to maximise their progress. Homework provision is very good and forms an integral and effective part of the curriculum. All lesson plans identify interesting and creative homework links that support and build upon the work pupils complete in class.
18. The 'Fit for Learning' programme devised by the school's deputy is a key feature of its curriculum. The programme ensures that on the two days pupils do not have a PE lesson, they receive a 15 minute planned physical activity based upon detailed modules for their age group. The programme is obviously concerned with promoting pupils' physical fitness, but it is also designed to promote skills in listening, organisation, co-ordination, creativity and collaboration. Above all, the programme promotes pupils taking responsibility for their learning. Evaluation of the programme is soon to be undertaken by Warwick University, but it is clear from watching pupils prepare for and participate in Fit for Learning sessions, and in discussing this aspect of the curriculum with them, that they thoroughly enjoy it. Moreover, the additional curriculum time allocated to physical activity in no way detracts from the quality of learning in other subjects or high academic standards pupils achieve. Indeed, the school's belief that this programme actually enhances learning is hard to dispute. Much thought and hard work has gone into planning the logistics of organising timetables and the hall accommodation to support daily 'Fit for Learning' sessions. This has been successful and the whole thing runs smoothly, with no loss of curriculum time or disruption to learning.
19. Another feature of creative curriculum organisation is the way the school uses support staff to enhance pupils' learning. For example, to offset disruption to lessons, the support

assistant who helps those pupils using 'Success Maker'² works flexible hours, including before the start of the school day and during lunchtimes. This also results in the very efficient use of the bank of computers used for this programme. The school's two other computer suites are almost in constant use, with classes being split effectively between teachers, technicians and nursery nurses to ensure pupils get individual use of computers and no time is wasted.

20. The school's interesting programme of visits and visitors provide quality first-hand learning experiences for pupils and enrich the curriculum. Very good quality links exist with the wider community. In particular, each year group benefits from thoughtfully planned business partnerships that help pupils make meaningful links between what they learn in school and the everyday world of work. There is a very good range of interesting extra-curricular activities and events that provide pupils with lots of scope to extend their education after school and at lunchtimes. These include clubs for art, chess, science, ICT, drama, dance and numerous seasonal sports.

The headteacher's excellent leadership and management skills permeate all aspects of the school's work and ethos and are pivotal to its success.

21. The visitor to Knowle cannot fail to be impressed by the many very good things that take place there. On entering the buildings, the school is welcoming and there is an industrious atmosphere. The quality of work on display speaks much for the high standards achieved. Pupils move around in an orderly and purposeful way; the smiles on peoples' faces portray a school that is at ease with itself as it strives for improvement. The headteacher is the pivot in this. She is an inspirational leader and manager with a very clear vision of what is right for the school, its pupils and staff. The pursuit of high academic and personal standards for pupils, and excellent quality in all that is done, is at the heart of her priorities. Moreover, the headteacher is successful in motivating others to join with her in this endeavour and the school's other senior managers, staff and governors do this willingly and enthusiastically. The shared determination to succeed and to continue to improve is one of the headteacher's great accomplishments.
22. The deputy headteacher gives very good support to the work of the head and together they form a strong and effective team. The deputy too provides an inspirational lead, both as a class teacher and as an instigator of change, being the creator and drive behind the Fit for Learning programme. The deputy and senior management team all play a central role in school management. The management roles of subject co-ordinators have been improved since the last inspection and all are now significantly involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and improving the quality of education in their subjects.
23. Governors have a record of successful support and management. They know much about the school, challenge it by asking the right questions at the right time and have effective procedures to check on progress. The governors and headteacher pursue the principles of 'Best Value' very effectively in all the decisions they make.
24. The issues raised by the previous inspections have all been tackled very effectively and the school has improved in many other areas at the same time. Self-evaluation and improvement is well entrenched in the school. There is an excellent programme for the monitoring of standards, teaching and the curriculum. The rigorous analysis of performance data has helped the school raise standards. For example, results are unpicked and analysed to identify areas where improvement is needed; detailed courses

² An ICT programme to support the learning of lower attaining pupils

of action are then planned and regularly evaluated to ensure progress occurs as intended. A good example was the school's identification that boys were underachieving in writing, resulting in a thoughtfully planned and highly successful programme to raise boys' standards in this aspect of English. Another aspect of successful management has been the significant and ongoing investment in new technology. The impact of this on the quality of teaching and learning in ICT has been phenomenal, with pupils benefiting from regular, individual, access to computers and teachers being well supported by trained technicians and 'state of the art' resources that maximise the impact of their teaching.

25. There is no room for complacency in this school. The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to pupils achieving high standards, but are determined that the school should not be dominated solely by this quest. There is also a strong and shared aim to develop pupils as well-rounded individuals who are good to know. Highly successful management ensures that the right balance is struck and both aims successfully realised.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Aspects of annual reports to parents on children's progress could be more informative.

26. The annual reports to parents about their children's progress contain some very good features. For example, the inclusion of targets for improvement, comments by children and considerable detail on standards and progress in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, however, the information is restricted to what pupils have *experienced* during the year, rather than what they have achieved, and in each year group the comments are the same for every pupil. This system does not give parents all the information to which they are entitled and means that the reports do not meet the legally required standards. Furthermore, in some year groups, subjects are reported on collectively rather than separately, which is also unsatisfactory, and reports for children in the Foundation Stage are against National Curriculum subjects rather than the six areas of learning upon which the curriculum for these children is based.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Improve the quality of information to parents in annual reports about their children's progress* by:

- ensuring that from Year 1 upwards reports for all pupils address each subject of the National Curriculum separately;
- ensuring that parents are given information about their child(ren's) standards and progress, strengths and weaknesses, in each subject; and
- ensuring that reporting on the standards and progress of children in the Foundation Stage is against the six areas of learning upon which the curriculum for these children is based, rather than against National Curriculum subjects.

(Paragraph 26)

**The school had already identified weaknesses in their reports and plans to improve them are already in hand.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
19	61	10	10	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	31	467
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	30	33	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	30
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	63	63	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (99)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	30
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	63	63	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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
	2000	36	31	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	33	35
	Girls	31	29	31
	Total	65	63	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (97)	93 (94)	99 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	33	31
	Girls	31	30	26
	Total	65	63	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	97 (94)	94 (92)	100 (98)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (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	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	395
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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 of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	33.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	226

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	920,611
Total expenditure	967,291
Expenditure per pupil	1,814
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,982
Balance carried forward to next year	18,302

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 41%

Number of questionnaires sent out	528
Number of questionnaires returned	196

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	52	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	14	3	0
The teaching is good.	51	41	1	1	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	45	29	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	41	6	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	51	18	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	41	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	47	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	38	11	5	10