



Knowle Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113277
LEA Plymouth
Inspection number 282868
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew Watters HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ringmore Way
School category	Community		West Oark
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Plymouth PL5 3QG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 365364
Number on roll	328	Fax number	01752 351007
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Joy Littlejohns
Date of previous inspection	23 March 1998	Headteacher	Mrs Judy Milford

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

When Knowle Primary School was inspected in November 2003 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to provide a satisfactory quality of education. The school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Plymouth where most homes are owned by housing associations or the local authority. Nearly all the pupils are of White British origin. Over a quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and just under a quarter have been placed on the school's register of special educational needs. Both these figures are high and above the national average. When they enter the school the pupils' attainment is below what is expected for their age particularly in literacy, numeracy and their personal development.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory with some good features. HMI agree with this judgement. Standards are rising and most pupils are making satisfactory progress. The pupils' achievements in Year 6 are very good. However, standards at Key Stage 2 are too low particularly in literacy and numeracy. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory although standards are well below what is expected for the children's ages. The school is a welcoming community and strives for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and teaching in Year 6 is exceptionally good. Nevertheless there is not yet enough consistently good or better teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2. Numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are not taught effectively enough in other subjects. The pupils' behaviour, their attitudes and their personal development are good. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective partnership that is focused successfully on raising standards. The senior leadership team and other senior teachers make a positive contribution to raising standards. Monitoring and evaluation are systematic and generally rigorous. Governors discharge their responsibilities satisfactorily. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school gives satisfactory value for money. There is a secure foundation for further development and the school's capacity to improve is good. One of the senior teachers said, 'We know that we can make even more improvement and are determined to do so.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and the achievement levels of all pupils particularly in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2. Focus carefully on improving basic skills in sentence structure and grammar, speaking and listening and the pupils' mental recall of number patterns and calculation strategies.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching. Make sure the pupils' work is always sufficiently challenging, the pace of learning is brisk, expectations are consistently high and that all pupils are supported well to achieve their targets.
- Extend the teaching of ICT and mathematics by identifying opportunities for teaching key skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are rising. Based on their different starting points and capabilities most pupils are making satisfactory progress to improve and achieve their challenging targets. The gap between what they are expected to reach for their ages and what they are currently achieving is closing more rapidly than previously. Some pupils, for example in Years 2 and 6, are making good, and occasionally very good, progress. But

this is not yet a consistent feature in all year groups, particularly in literacy and numeracy at Key Stage 2, where standards are still too low. In 2005 the pupils did well in the national tests at Key Stage 1 but results in the tests at Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory. Standards were particularly low in English where just over half the Year 6 pupils who took the tests reached the level expected for their age. Nevertheless the school is successfully tackling the low attainment levels that have persisted in the past and there is no significant underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They behave well, speak politely to their teachers and each other, work hard, and move around the school with purpose, care and consideration. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships are good. The pupils respect each other and celebrate each others' achievements, for example during 'praise assemblies'. There is a very active and successful school council which enables the pupils to make a positive contribution to their school life, such as improving playground resources. Pupils feel safe and secure and know who to turn to if they need help.

The importance of leading a healthy lifestyle is promoted well. The pupils know that healthy food and regular exercise will help them concentrate in their lessons. Year 6 pupils enjoy taking responsibility for younger pupils in Key Stage 1, such as supervising their play. Fundraising and charitable activities encourage the pupils' social responsibilities and understanding of global events. These activities also help pupils learn how to manage simple budgets and prepare them for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Nearly half the teaching is good and in Year 6 it is very good. Weak and poor teaching has been eliminated but more remains to be done to strengthen the overall quality of teaching and ensure that it is consistently good or better in each year group and class.

In the best lessons the teachers' expectations were high and questions were used effectively to probe the pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. Lessons were well organised and assessment was used effectively to match the pupils' tasks to their different learning needs. Teachers' subject knowledge was good and there was a brisk pace of learning. Higher attaining pupils were challenged well to do even better and the lower attaining pupils were given very good support to improve their basic skills in reading and writing. Teaching assistants are trained well and make a generally good contribution to raising standards.

In the lessons that were weaker and only just satisfactory, teachers were not firm enough with the pupils and tolerated low level disruption. This led to a slow pace of learning. The pupils' work was not matched well enough to their different starting points and pupils were not given enough support to help them achieve their targets. This is also shown in the pupils' books where the teachers' written comments do not always give the pupils enough help to improve their work, particularly in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is generally planned well and evaluated carefully. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported effectively. For example, their individual targets are monitored carefully and changed when they have been achieved. A good range of additional activities enhance the overall quality of the curriculum, such as an arts week which includes music, dance and drama. Opportunities for improving the pupils' literacy skills are planned in other subjects although this is not the case in numeracy. Interactive whiteboards are used well to motivate the pupils and reinforce important teaching points. In some lessons the pupils responded well when asked to show their work using this new technology. ICT is generally taught satisfactorily but opportunities to extend the pupils' ICT skills are not sufficiently developed in other subjects.

There is a good range of lunchtime and after school clubs which are well attended and enjoyed by the pupils. They include the performing arts, an ICT club, a cycling safety club and various sporting activities. The school makes an effective contribution to the community. Year 6 pupils have helped improve a local woodland environment and other pupils have been involved in a project to reduce litter on the local housing estates. During an assembly the pupils were reminded about the importance of respect and tolerance for households during Halloween and Christmas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and encouraged to have high aspirations. They know about the importance of staying safe. The breakfast club ensures that pupils who attend have a suitable meal at the start of the day. The support for the pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Pupils' targets are challenging and their achievements are monitored carefully. Child protection procedures are rigorous and risk assessments are carefully attended to. All staff have been made aware of what to do if they feel a child is at risk. There are good links with parents, carers and support agencies. This ensures that teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the pupils' social and emotional needs. The response to a recent parents' questionnaire was very good and showed that the parents are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides determined and effective leadership which ensures a successful focus on raising standards and lifting the pupils' achievement levels. She is resilient and committed to further improvement. The deputy headteacher is a very good role model for other teachers and gives very good support to the headteacher. Together they form an effective partnership which is successfully promoting the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility. The senior leadership team and other senior teachers make a positive contribution to the school's collective leadership. They have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A consultant teacher has given good support to help improve the quality of teaching.

Monitoring is systematic and generally rigorous. Teachers are given helpful feedback about how to improve their work and are held to account for the standards achieved by the pupils. Self-evaluation has recently become sharply focused on checking the impact of initiatives and takes account of the views of parents, pupils and staff. This has led to a generally accurate appraisal of the school's most pressing priorities. Assessment information is used very well to check the pupils' attainment levels and track their progress. This is central to the school's vision for further success and improvement. The school's capacity to improve is good.

Governors discharge their responsibilities satisfactorily. Under the strong leadership of the chair of governors they are making sure that the school works hard to help the pupils succeed and avoid the mistakes of the past. The local authority continues to provide a consistently satisfactory level of support and is committed to working closely with the school in the coming months.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Knowle Primary School Ringmore Way West Park Plymouth PL5 3QG

9 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and visiting your lessons. You are all friendly, cheerful and polite and made sure that for the two days we were with you we felt a part of your school. Thank you for sharing your work with us. We could see that you try hard to do your best and help each other. Well done! We think your school council does a good job and works hard to improve things for you, like the changes to the playground, which you really appreciate.

As you know I have been visiting your school each term to check that it is getting better. I am very pleased to tell you that your school has really improved! We had a good time talking to your teachers and it was good to see how well they and you got on together in lessons. Your teachers, the headteacher and all the other adults in school work very hard to make sure that you are safe, that you do well with your work and enjoy it!

We have asked Mrs Milford and the teachers to carry on improving the school to make sure that your writing, reading and mathematics keep getting better, that all your lessons are really good, and that you have more opportunities to use computers and the new whiteboards!

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters Her Majesty's Inspector