



Knowle Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131292
Local Authority Solihull
Inspection number 293732
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Rockey HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kixley Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Knowle
Age range of pupils	3–11		Solihull B93 0JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01564 776209
Number on roll (school)	464	Fax number	01564 771810
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Lynda Mackai
		Headteacher	Jenny Godsall
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Located in a village environment, this large primary school has a strong tradition of local community involvement. The majority of children are from a White British background and there are more boys than girls. Most children come from advantaged backgrounds; not many receive free school meals. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is below the national average and few speak English as an additional language. The deputy headteacher left in July 2006 and the school has been unable to appoint another.

The school offers a before and after school club in partnership with a private company who also run 'Early Birds'; a privately run on-site nursery. This was inspected at the same time and is reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Knowle CE Primary is a good school where all children thrive and enjoy learning. They do well in their work and grow up into confident, articulate young people who understand the need to make right choices about living healthy, active lives. Children behave well; they are courteous, caring and show good respect and tolerance for each other. They are developing good spiritual, social and moral awareness, although their understanding of life in our multi-racial society is limited because the school does not provide enough opportunities for learning about different cultures. The school is held in high regard in the locality. Children make a valuable contribution to the community through a range of activities. Parents are pleased with the work of the school, although some do not think their views are taken sufficiently into account.

Children really enjoy school; their attendance and punctuality are excellent. One reason for this is the stimulating curriculum which engages children and motivates them. Building Learning Power (BLP) contributes strongly to children's desire to learn and successfully develops their skills and attitudes for life-long learning. It is used effectively to support children's learning in all subjects. Good teaching helps children to achieve well. However, assessment information is not used well enough to provide suitably challenging activities for all children and marking and target setting are not used consistently by all staff.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress and this continues throughout Years 1 to 6. At the end of Year 6, children attain exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. However, the school has rightly recognised that some children do not make as much progress as they could. This is because of insufficient evaluation of the progress of some groups of learners. The school is now addressing this and has put in place an effective system to identify rates of progress and provide suitable intervention to ensure all children, especially the more able, do as well as they should. This has had a positive impact, particularly in writing and children say they enjoy being stretched to reach challenging targets. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure a greater degree of challenge for the more able in every lesson.

The headteacher provides clear educational direction and purpose and is well supported by staff. The school has a largely accurate view of its effectiveness. However, monitoring and evaluation activities are not yet sufficiently rigorous or systematic in prioritising areas for improvement and sharing good practice. The school recognises this and has good capacity to make further improvements. Governors have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are well informed, committed and take an active part in evaluating the work of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more systematic and rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching in order to prioritise and drive improvement.

- Raise children's awareness and understanding of the implications of living in a multi-racial society.
- Use assessment and tracking data more effectively and make sure all groups of children are making the progress they are capable of.
- Set children challenging targets and ensure that marking consistently provides them with clear feedback on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school, their knowledge and skills are above those expected for their age. Most children have benefited from some pre-school experience before joining the school. Many have attended the privately run 'Early Birds' on-site nursery. This gets them off to a good start. They make good progress as they move through the school and reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because of the quality of the focused teaching they receive. Children demonstrate high standards, skills and confidence in the use of ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Older children act as playground leaders and have made a huge difference to the quality of play at lunchtime. They organise 'Lunch Bunch' activities for all children, including those in the infant department. Children approach them if they have any concerns and they play an important role in the school's anti-bullying procedures. Children are fully involved in the development of the school. They negotiate playground and class rules and the school council is an effective forum for representing their views. Children make a good contribution to the community. They learn and sing Second World War songs, for example, at the British Legion and also host a strawberry summer tea for senior citizens. Skills important for their future success, such as taking responsibility for their learning and showing initiative, develop well and are reinforced through the BLP programme. Children understand the importance of eating healthily and staying active and this is encouraged through a range of school initiatives. The 'Walking Bus', organised by parents, encourages many to walk to school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching helps children to make good progress. Well planned lessons capture their interest in learning. For example, in Year 5, drama was used successfully to help develop children's understanding about the Second World War. Teachers use

BLP well to develop children's confidence and independence. As a result, they are happy to 'have a go' at the tasks they are given. Relationships are good and children readily turn to adults for advice when necessary. Children with learning difficulties receive effective support from teachers and support assistants, and this helps them make good progress towards their targets. A range of assessment procedures is in place. However, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to provide suitably challenging activities for all children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum allows children to achieve well and stimulates their interest in learning a wide range of subjects, including foreign languages such as Spanish. Foundation Stage children benefit from a good range of learning activities, including those planned for the outdoor classroom. Links between subjects are developed well, and, for instance, history is used effectively in developing writing skills. Children throughout the school enjoy the good range of educational outings, such as those to Coventry Cathedral and Warwick Castle, and the wide range of activities provided during the lunch break and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Child protection arrangements are effective and the school works well in partnership with parents and external agencies to ensure children's well-being. The local authority has recently carried out a health and safety audit and no issues were raised. Children joining the school later than is usual are sensitively inducted and their peers support them well. For example, children explained they had displayed labels in Japanese around the classroom to help a newly arrived Japanese child feel at home. The guidance children receive about their work is satisfactory, although marking and target setting are not used consistently by all staff. This makes it difficult for some children to understand how to improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is passionate about developing life-long, independent learners and she has been instrumental in establishing a clearer focus on developing these skills for learning. Her drive to ensure all groups of children do as well as they can has resulted in staff having higher expectations about the rate at which children progress across the school. The governors have been unable to appoint a new deputy headteacher and this has presented additional leadership challenges for the senior team. The assistant headteachers have recognised their need to develop wider leadership roles to support the headteacher and are all involved in nationally recognised training.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us in your school and for being so friendly. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about what you think about your school. Your parents think you go to a good school and we agree with them. We have judged that your school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the highlights

- You really enjoy learning and you work hard.
- You are prepared well for the future - we were impressed with the way BLP is giving you specific skills for life.
- You behave well and work collaboratively.
- The 'Lunch Bunch' team provides good fun activities at lunchtime.
- Drama is helping you with your writing and makes learning exciting.
- You enjoy learning other languages like Spanish and French.
- Adults look after you and help you to choose a healthy lifestyle.
- We were pleased to see that you come to school every day and on time.
- You have an interesting range of lessons, clubs and visits.
- You make a real contribution to the community - keep practising those Second World War songs for the British Legion event!

Here are the things we think need to improve

- Teachers should keep a closer eye on your progress and make sure everyone is doing as well as they can. We think some of you could do even better!
- Teachers should set you challenging targets and make sure the marking in your books shows you how to improve your work.
- We think you should learn more about the range of different cultures and beliefs of people who live in the United Kingdom.
- Teachers should watch each other's lessons more often and look out for ways of making their lessons even better - you could help them with some ideas for this.

Thank you again for your help and keep up the hard work!