

# Knowl Hill CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109966
<b>Local Authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	310157
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	68
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Hartland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christina Moss
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Bath Road Knowl Hill Reading RG10 9UX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 822584
<b>Fax number</b>	01628 822584

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Knowl Hill is a small rural primary school located close to Maidenhead. Most pupils are of white British heritage and are generally from advantaged home circumstances. However, there are also some pupils from social housing. There are four mixed-age classes. The school has Investors in People status, and achieved the Healthy Schools Award in 2006. The headteacher resigned her position in the summer term 2007, and the school is currently led by a part-time acting headteacher, who is the headteacher of a local first school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Knowl Hill CE Primary provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. It has a number of strengths, mostly relating to pastoral care and welfare and some aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

Inspection questionnaires relating to about two-thirds of the pupils were returned, and, almost without exception, these were overwhelmingly positive. Many written comments added to questionnaires expressed appreciation of the ways in which the school cares for the children. One sums up these views well when noting, 'Knowl Hill is a lovely, small friendly school that treats each child as an individual.'

Teachers relate well to their pupils and help promote the family atmosphere of which the school is justly proud. They know their pupils very well, and make detailed assessments of their day-to-day social and academic development. However, teachers do not use this information well enough to ensure that they consistently provide activities to challenge pupils of all abilities. A small, but significant number of the pupils interviewed during the course of the inspection found some or all of the work in hand to be too easy. These weaknesses offset the strengths in teaching and mean that most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. This is because teachers closely monitor their learning, and ensure that teaching assistants give them good quality help, either individually or in very small groups, in lessons. This strength of the school attracts a number of families from outside the catchment area.

A further factor affecting pupils' progress is the quality of leadership provided by teaching staff. Teachers do not have a clear overview of pupils' performance throughout the school in the areas for which they have responsibility. In addition, they do not evaluate information available to help inform their actions. For example, the previous inspection highlighted the need to improve pupils' performance in writing in Key Stage 2. In responding to this, the school failed to look carefully enough at an analysis of assessments of the writing of younger pupils. This shows that the low standards in writing in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 do not provide a sufficiently secure platform for development in Key Stage 2. Consequently, the action taken by the school to improve writing in Key Stage 2 was not fully effective. Evidence from pupils' books shows clearly that they do not have enough opportunities to write at length in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Some aspects of pupils' personal development are good and reflect the good pastoral care provided. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils reported that bullying is a persistent problem. However, it is not widespread. The acting headteacher very quickly identified the need to improve pupils' behaviour, and is taking action to remedy the situation. She is providing good leadership during this period of transition.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Teaching reflects a secure understanding of how very young children learn. The children enjoy a great deal of individual attention, and staff are adept at looking at what needs to be done to help each individual to improve. However, their interventions in children's play to help develop learning are sometimes not effective enough. The school has responded well to

recommendations from its previous inspection. It now provides its children with a satisfactory range of structured opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills, both indoors and out. However, there is not enough focus on developing children's early writing skills during free-choice sessions. The staff look after the children well and their assessments of children's achievements are secure. The result of this provision is that the children make satisfactory progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing by reviewing the plan devised for this purpose. In particular, ensure that pupils of all ages have more opportunities to write at length, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that teachers provide achievable challenges to pupils of all levels of attainment.
- Develop the leadership and management skills of all teachers. In particular, ensure that they are involved in raising standards through the rigorous monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Throughout the school there is considerable year-on-year fluctuation in the attainment of year groups because of the small numbers of pupils involved.

Typically, attainment on entry is what is expected of four year-olds. By the time children move into Year 1, standards are generally above average in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are broadly average in mathematical development and physical development, but below average in most aspects of communication, language and literacy.

The results of the 2007 national assessments for pupils in Year 2 were significantly better than in previous years, and are most likely to be above average when they are ratified. This group of pupils started school with much better developed range of skills than most groups. Currently, standards in Year 2 are average and pupils are making satisfactory progress.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 did better in the national tests for 2007 than in previous years. In relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2, they made satisfactory progress. Currently standards in Year 6 are broadly average.

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Further analysis of test results and scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that standards in writing are not high enough. This is because, in Key Stage 1, there is too much copy writing and too few opportunities for pupils to work independently. In both key stages, teachers do not generally provide activities designed to provide writing challenges at different levels according to pupils' abilities.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

A noteworthy feature of the school is the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular, most pupils show good spiritual awareness through the respect they show one another and in their ability to reflect on how well they are doing at school. Pupils

have a keen sense of right and wrong. They generally develop good social skills within the school's family atmosphere. One member of the school council commented, 'This is a school where you make friends quickly and everyone knows everyone else.' Despite this sense of family, there is a very small number of pupils with social and emotional difficulties who have yet to learn how to relate successfully to others. For example, these pupils sometimes react badly if they are involved in disputes at playtime. The school is keenly aware of this, and ensures that pupils are closely supervised. The acting headteacher is closely monitoring the situation.

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep safe and about the importance of diet and exercise in leading healthy lifestyles. They make a good contribution to their school community by carrying out responsible jobs and to the wider community through participation in local events. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education and to become life-long learners.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

A good feature is the school's use of specialist teaching in physical education, music and French. Its impact is seen in the good learning and the interest and enjoyment shown by the pupils in these lessons. This is because the teachers successfully transmit their enthusiasm and expertise to the pupils. In a music lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, the pupils concentrated hard and showed real pleasure in learning. This enabled them to rise to the challenge presented when they used a variety of percussion instruments to combine different rhythmic patterns within short performances.

There are two key weaknesses in otherwise secure teaching. Teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels and do not ensure that their pupils clearly understand precisely what they expect them to achieve. As a result, the pupils do not learn as well as they should. However, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities learn well because skilled teaching assistants give them a large amount of individual attention and this helps them to keep up.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Good features of the curriculum are the termly 'themed weeks' based around subjects such as art or history, and the provision of residential visits for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school also successfully promotes its strong family ethos and a sense of community through whole-school activities. For example, an annual blackberry picking session results in the jam made for harvest gifts.

Planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is not always adapted to reflect the mixed-age class groupings. This means that on occasions pupils repeat work that they did the year before in the same class. This occurred during the inspection, when pupils in Year 6 said that had already covered some of their mathematics work about probability in Year 5. In addition, teachers do not always use information from their detailed assessments of pupils to help plan work at different and challenging levels. In writing activities, for example, pupils are frequently given the same basic task to complete regardless of age or ability.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of the school's pastoral care is good. The school is vigilant about health and safety and child-protection matters. It keeps good records of the checks made on the background of the staff and other adults who have contact with the pupils. The weakness in this area of the school's provision is the quality of academic guidance given to pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, and corrections are not always used to help pupils improve. Pupils have targets to achieve, but these lack precision and pupils' progress in meeting them is not reviewed often enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The acting headteacher brings with her a wealth of expertise. She has very quickly developed a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is ensuring that staff are encouraged and supported. The teachers with responsibilities for helping to manage the school have not been adequately involved in evaluating either the provision or its impact on the pupils' progress. For example, an analysis of the performance of children in the Foundation Stage, undertaken by the inspector, showed that children generally have underdeveloped skills in writing from an early age. The school was not fully aware of this. In addition, the subject leaders do not have an overview of the precise detail of pupils' performance in years other than those they teach. This is because of the way in which data is collated.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to and supportive of the school. However, they are not involved enough in the process of school self-evaluation.





## Annex A

## 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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knowl Hill CofE Primary School, Reading, RG10 9UX

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school. I am writing to you to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

I think that your school is satisfactory overall, with some things that are good. Here are some of the things I liked best about your school.

- It is a happy place to be in. Everyone is friendly and welcoming. You usually get on well with each other and your teachers.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Whenever you need help, there is always someone there for you.

All of the other people who help run your school want it to be even better. Here are some things I have suggested that they should do.

- I would like your teachers to help you to improve your writing. To do this I would like them to have another look at their plans. In particular, I would like them to make sure that all of you have time to practise your skills by writing much more in your books.
- I would like your teachers to plan their lessons so that those of you who sometimes find your work a bit easy always have to think really hard. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!
- I would also like your teachers to find out more about being in charge of different subjects. I would particularly like them to find out more about the different ways that they could check on how well you are doing. This will help them to make your work even better than it is already.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector