

Knowle Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135203
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	329053
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	497
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Lamprey
Headteacher	Peter Overton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Queenshill Road Knowle Park Bristol BS4 2XG
Telephone number	0117 3772678
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has been in existence for less than two years, following the amalgamation of an infant school and a junior school. Therefore, it does not have a previous inspection report. The great majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, and includes pupils with physical needs. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Knowle Park Primary is satisfactory. Its standard of education and the outcomes that it achieves are improving. Indeed, the great majority of parents are very positive and enthusiastic about the changes to this new school, which they already recognise and value. Parents express the view that the staff are united in their commitment to ensuring the best interests of all pupils. They give much of the credit for this to the headteacher, who is ably supported by his leadership team. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'The headteacher has turned the school around. It has a fantastic personal and caring atmosphere.'

Although the school has existed for too short a time to identify meaningful trends in its academic performance, standards are rising and achievement is satisfactory and improving. When children join the Reception class their skills and knowledge are well below expectations for their age. They make good progress, so that they begin Year 1 with standards that are still below, but closer to, the average. Standards in the most recent, Year 6 national tests were below average. However, pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to meet or exceed challenging targets, bringing standards in English and science close to the national average. This rise in English comes from a range of improvements and support strategies, particularly in writing. While good progress is evident for some groups and in some subjects, including boys in English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress is relatively slower in aspects of mathematics, where standards remain below average. Although the school is steadily reducing the inconsistencies which affect learning, variations remain in the quality of teaching. In particular, lessons do not always provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils.

Good personal development underpins the improvements in standards and achievement. One parent summed this up with the comment, 'My son is a very happy child who loves coming to school. Even in the holidays we have to drive past to make sure that there are no children in school.' Pupils love the clubs and visits. They report lessons are becoming more interesting, because of the creative approach to the curriculum, developing themes such as 'India' and 'Bridges'. These lead to 'showcase events', which not only excite pupils, but successfully involve parents, who come in to enjoy the results. Parents and pupils widely acknowledge that there is good behaviour. Pupils feel safe, reflecting very good personal support. These positive features are allied to rigorous systems for monitoring academic progress and the use of targets to help pupils improve their learning. Despite the school's rigorous attempts to improve attendance, this remains below average.

Parents credit all staff with sustaining a happy and caring ethos in the school. The headteacher has been particularly successful in helping to develop a harmonious community so quickly through a quietly efficient approach, which commands respect and inspires confidence. The leadership team evaluates the school's performance rigorously and very accurately, combining this analysis with high expectations. The results are evident in improvements in several key areas, including academic performance, and show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points, which are often well below expectations for this age group. Progress is particularly good in writing, calculation, physical

and creative development. This follows from several strengths in provision. One such strength is the good relationships established between staff and children, while another is the skilled questioning, which allows children to express their ideas. The environment is bright and stimulating. Staff carefully observe and record children's progress and use this information confidently to plan the next stages of learning. Although planning is good, the school recognises that there should be even more opportunities for children to find out things for themselves.

Personal development is a further strength and children develop their emotions well, through daily whole-class discussions. Staff are also very committed to children's welfare, and ensure a safe and secure environment. Leadership is good, so that all staff work well together to ensure good achievement. Children's needs are well known as soon as they start school because there are close links with pre-school groups. The Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of the areas for development, so that, for example, there are imminent plans to improve the outdoor area to allow for even more varied learning opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement particularly in mathematics, and ensure that all pupils receive the appropriate level of challenge, especially the more able pupils.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all teaching matches the quality of the best in improving pupils' learning.
- Further improve attendance so that all pupils share in the improved progress.

A small proportion of 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

Standards are higher than when the school opened, principally because of improvements in teaching. Pupils' greater motivation is especially evident when teachers develop links between various subjects, such as science and literacy.

As a result, achievement is satisfactory and improving, and standards are now close to average by Year 6. The improvement is most evident in English, where the considerable efforts to boost performance through various intervention strategies, both in and out of lessons, have paid off. Progress in mathematics is more variable, especially in relation to problem-solving activities, because some teachers are not sufficiently confident in teaching these skills. In addition, some higher attainers are not consistently challenged to reach the higher levels of which they are capable. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, as a result of receiving effective, well-targeted support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A strength of the school is its success in improving pupils' personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and spiritual aspects are dealt with particularly effectively in assemblies. Most pupils behave well in lessons and are very enthusiastic about their learning and other school activities. Pupils feel safe in school and confident that the few incidents of boisterous behaviour at lunchtimes are dealt with well. Pupils have a good understanding of why it is important to have a healthy lifestyle, for example

talking knowledgeably about healthy food options. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as acting as monitors and contributing to the community by raising funds for charities. Although there are still some weaknesses in basic skills, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The leadership team's extensive monitoring has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, although there are still inconsistencies in practice, for example in the use of lesson objectives and in the engagement of pupils.. In general, lessons are managed well. In the best lessons, teachers plan well for a range of ability and involve pupils actively in their learning, through paired discussions and a variety of activities. Pupils achieve well when the teachers have high expectations, as seen for example in music lessons. Constructive marking and feedback, which inform pupils on how to improve their work, are also strengths in some of the teaching. Where learning is satisfactory, there is a tendency for the teaching to be too controlling, not giving enough scope for more able pupils in particular to be challenged and to achieve to their potential.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are very enthusiastic about the curriculum. This was observed, for example, when all pupils in a Year 5 lesson performed with much interest and confidence on wind instruments. Pupils enjoy the range of after school activities, and these have a very high take-up. They also love the residential trips. There is a well organised programme of personal, social and health education, which contributes effectively to pupils' good personal development. The school makes good use of expertise from outside, for example in providing specialised teaching in modern foreign languages, art, music and physical education, and pupils greatly appreciate the opportunities provided by these lessons. There is good provision in the curriculum for vulnerable pupils, and the help they receive from support staff often enables them to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good support for pupils' individual needs, both personal and academic. Consequently, pupils feel safe. The sense of security is strengthened by good family links, exemplified by the large number of parents and pupils who attended the 'bedtime story' activity during the inspection. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are secure. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and often make good progress and there is good support for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language. The 'legacy project', for example, ensures pupils make a smooth transition to senior schools. The school has also developed good assessment systems in a relatively short space of time. Pupils' academic progress is tracked and analysed carefully, and is followed up with successful intervention strategies to raise achievement, particularly in English. Information is used effectively to set meaningful learning targets. In the best lessons, teachers use these targets to motivate pupils and to show them how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully embedded a new leadership and management structure in a relatively short time, and many parents are very conscious of the positive impact of this on the school. Monitoring in particular is very thorough. It has resulted in well focused strategies that are beginning to raise standards, and ensuring a vibrant curriculum. These initiatives have started to address some of the inconsistencies in teaching and learning, although the school knows that it has more to do. Governors are knowledgeable and challenging, yet supportive, and are involved closely in the everyday life of the school.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It knows the needs of its community well and has used this awareness to nurture its educational effectiveness. Pupils enjoy taking on the responsibility of helping each other at the school and there is an inclusive ethos which encourages mutual respect and equal opportunities for all. The school has a high profile in the local community, for example in its charity work, and it has forged links with an inner city school so that pupils experience the wide range of cultures, faiths and traditions that are represented in this country. Introducing pupils to a global perspective is at an earlier stage, although the school is pursuing links with a Zambian school. Pupils also show a good understanding of some of the issues facing people in other countries, such as India. The leadership ensures a productive relationship with other institutions. These include support agencies and links with other local schools. These links ensure greater learning opportunities for pupils and increased professional development opportunities for staff.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

6 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knowle Park Primary School, Bristol BS4 2XG

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and talking so enthusiastically to us. You were very polite and keen to tell us how proud you are of your school.

At the moment, the school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. It has improved over a short period of time, and many of you are now doing better than before, especially in English. We know that you enjoy school, feel safe, and particularly like the good range of visits and clubs. You also behave well and understand why it is important to live healthily. We agree with your parents that the school looks after you well. Your school is well led and all the staff work hard to make the school a happy place. However, not all of you attend school as regularly as the pupils in many other schools. This means that, some of you miss out on the good things in school and do not do as well in your work as you should. Teachers often make your lessons interesting, with lots to do, although sometimes the more able among you find the work too easy.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve its performance. One is to continue the efforts to get some of you to attend more regularly. Another is to ensure that you all make even faster progress, especially in mathematics, and that your teachers give more challenging work to those of you who find the work easy. Finally, we have asked the school to make sure that all teaching matches the good lessons that you already enjoy, to improve your learning during lessons. You can help by working hard and doing your very best, so that everyone gets even better results.

Once again, thank you for letting us see you at work and play, and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Laver

Lead inspector