

Knowle DGE

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109392
Local Authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	337278
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane HMI

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Cameron
Headteacher	Peter Evans
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They visited 17 lessons, observing 13 teachers. They had meetings with pupils, governors, the school's management teams, a local authority representative and a group of other professionals who support the school. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and files, progress data, and school policies and records. Six parental questionnaires were returned and considered. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment, learning and progress of different groups of pupils
- the school's evidence for personal development outcomes, particularly behaviour
- whether the school's leadership and management have the capacity and appropriate plans in place to ensure that the changes ahead lead to improvement in attainment, learning and progress.

Information about the school

In January 2010, Florence Brown Community Special School became known as Knowle DGE. It is now designated as a school for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and/or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils admitted to the school with social, emotional and behavioural needs is increasing and is now the majority. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are boys. The very large majority are of White British origin and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average.

Knowle DGE will move into new premises in June 2010. These premises include hostel provision and the potential to offer sixth form courses. During the inspection, the school occupied part of the old Florence Brown site. There are also inclusion bases at a local primary and secondary school where Knowle DGE pupils attend.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Knowle DGE is a good school. In the last few years, staff have adapted to significant changes in intake and had to cope with working in sub-standard accommodation while waiting for new buildings. However, its effective and knowledgeable senior leadership team has ensured that there have been ongoing improvements to the staff's knowledge and practice, to pupils' learning and to behaviour, while exciting plans have been realised in the development of the new learning centre. With the substantially improved accommodation and clear transition plans, the school is now well placed to improve further. In particular, it has great potential to build upon its broad and interesting curriculum and develop this by giving the pupils further opportunities to move forwards in their good work in practical subjects such as drama and technology. It also has exciting plans to develop stronger links with its community as well as improving outcomes for its pupils and ensuring it maintains its strengths in supporting those who have challenging special educational needs. Governors, leaders, staff and pupils are all excited and committed to the vision of the new school and the aspiration to offer 'Guidance', 'Discovery' and 'Enjoyment'.

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They leave with a range of appropriate accreditations and are then successful in securing further education courses. Behaviour is good. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, and the pupils, for the majority of the time, get on well together. There is clear evidence that incidents of challenging behaviour are reducing at the school and those individuals with very challenging behavioural or social needs are developing the skills to manage their own behaviour effectively.

Care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. From the start of each day, when pupils are warmly welcomed, committed and sensitive staff support them. Ongoing 'chats' as the day goes on, the breakfast club, clear whole-school behaviour management techniques and targeted mentoring mean that all pupils have the best chance to engage in successful learning. Attendance remains low overall due to the particular social and emotional needs of a few pupils, and despite the introduction of a number of successful interventions to reduce absence.

Teaching is satisfactory. In many lessons, pupils are purposeful and acquire new skills or knowledge. In a minority, the use of assessment and of additional adults, and the activities provided, are not focused enough to ensure that they lead to good progress for all pupils.

Partnerships are a particular strength of the school. Highly effective work with a wide variety of agencies, including educational psychologists, the school nurse and

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Connexions, means that there is a team approach to addressing pupils' needs. In addition to this, the school makes very effective links with other agencies, such as the Brook Advisory Workers, work experience providers and other local schools so that the curriculum and opportunities are wide for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of summer term 2010, improve the consistency of teaching in the school so that in all lessons learning is good or better by:
 - making better use of the existing assessment information to plan lessons and set learning outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils in all subjects
 - ensuring that challenging activities are provided at the appropriate level for individuals and groups
 - ensuring that ongoing assessment in lessons, marking and feedback is focused on what each pupil needs to do to improve
 - improving the ways in which additional adults are deployed in the classroom so that they are focused on achieving the best learning outcomes.
- Embed the range of individual and whole-school strategies further to improve attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

When they join the school, many pupils have had poor experiences of education. Due to interrupted schooling and/or learning or social and emotional difficulties, they have low levels of basic skills. Over time, progress is good in mathematics, literacy and science, and current data demonstrate that the school's targets for each individual are suitably challenging. Pupils take either GCSE, National Vocational Qualifications Level 1 or Entry-level accreditation. Their results represent good overall progress. The school's data show that looked after pupils and pupils from minority ethnic communities make good progress. In lessons, on the whole, pupils are engaged and behave well. They listen, participate and volunteer appropriate answers. Pupils were observed enjoying success, able to take risks in their learning, receive feedback and act upon it to improve their learning further. In a small minority of lessons, while some pupils made satisfactory progress, others merely completed an activity and learned little or refused to comply.

Pupils feel very safe. They said that any concerns are taken seriously and dealt with effectively by staff. They say there is no bullying. Incidents of racial abuse, homophobic abuse and religious intolerance are few. The school's 'restorative justice' approach has produced positive outcomes in disputes, allowing those involved to find a positive solution to the problems.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and sexual health. They have a good awareness of risk and of the dangers of the internet, drug taking and smoking. Evidence from the school suggests smoking is reducing among the

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pupils. Pupils enjoy sport and were seen participating energetically in physical education lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school through the school council or being mentors or sports leaders. Their views were incorporated into the new building's design and are regularly included in the school's monitoring of subjects and planned improvements. Pupils participate enthusiastically in fundraising and local events. Throughout the curriculum, pupils are developing good vocational skills. They are learning to listen and take advice, to work in teams, and to use their basic skills in different settings. An increasing number of pupils are now making their own way to school and arrive punctually. Pupils have strong sense of right and wrong and can debate issues thoughtfully. They have a good appreciation of art and drama, of different cultures and of some of the major issues facing the world at this time. The school recognizes there is more to be done to develop pupils' spiritual development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All lessons are planned in detail, with activities and resources prepared so that teaching is broadly satisfactory. Low-level disruptive behaviour is well managed so that learning

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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proceeds at a steady pace. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that that the learning outcome is very clear, the level of challenge is consistently high for individual pupils, and the work is well matched to groups of pupils and individuals. They maintain a lively pace, have good subject knowledge and their targeted questioning uses correct subject vocabulary and clarifies misconceptions. Pupils are asked to assess their own work and that of others, and this leads to immediate improvements. Where practice is less effective, pupils spend too long doing activities where the learning outcome is unclear. Sometimes the level of challenge is not appropriate and the anxiety related to managing the class results in too much teacher-talk and an overdependence on quick-fire questions to a few individuals. Although there is some sensitive one-to-one coaching and intervention from additional adults in the classrooms, their role is too often focused on keeping individual pupils on task and not enough on challenging them, and developing their learning and independence. Assessment and tracking of progress are in place at a whole-school level. Marking is regular, often very positive and detailed, noting the context of the work. However, it does not contain points for improvement, nor develops a dialogue with the pupils so they know what to do to improve to reach their targets.

Despite its poor site and accommodation, the school has been very imaginative in its use of spaces, resources and partnerships to offer a broad and interesting curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Practical subjects have a high profile and students clearly enjoy these opportunities and apply themselves well in food technology, resistant materials, green-wood working, and drama. Residential experiences and educational trips supplement the curriculum further. The inclusion bases at the local schools ensure that pupils have further academic challenge and wider social opportunities when appropriate.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The clear roles and responsibilities and effective work of the headteacher and his senior colleagues have been significant in steering the plans for the new school and the good progress and good personal development of the pupils. They are ably supported by the enthusiastic and energetic group of middle managers who carry out monitoring and improvement tasks effectively. Together, they have an accurate view of the school and have been working to respond to the changes in intake and secure good teaching and progress through continuing professional development. The committed governing body knows the school well. It has a detailed knowledge of pupils' progress, health and safety, and safeguarding, and has played an important part in recent plans.

Communication with parents and carers is good. The school works hard to involve parents and carers in the strategic development of the school and in their own child's learning by doing all it can to enable attendance at meetings and develop a partnership for the benefit of the pupil.

The school has robust safeguarding procedures. Good practice is evident in the way in which staff are recruited and personnel are checked, and records are monitored. The school has good procedures to respond to child protection concerns and tenaciously works with other agencies to ensure that, sometimes very complex, cases are being dealt with effectively. Governors are diligent in ensuring health and safety requirements are met. The school regularly analyses data to ensure that no group is at risk of discrimination or underachievement, and is aware of the groups that may be at particular risk and takes steps to ensure that their views are responded to. The school has good links, for example, with places of worship, a school in Kenya and other schools nationally to ensure that pupils learn about national, international and faith issues. The school promotes community cohesion well and has good plans and aspirations in place to increase significantly pupils' community involvement when they are located in their new building.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The school has robust safeguarding procedures. Good practice is evident in the way in which staff are recruited and personnel are checked, and records are monitored. The school has good procedures to respond to child protection concerns and tenaciously works with other agencies to ensure that, sometimes very complex, cases are being dealt with effectively. Governors are diligent in ensuring health and safety requirements are met. The school regularly analyses data to ensure that no group is at risk of discrimination or underachievement, and is aware of the groups that may be at particular risk and takes steps to ensure that their views are responded to. The school has good links, for example, with places of worship, a school in Kenya and other schools nationally to ensure that pupils learn about national, international and faith issues. The school promotes community cohesion well and has good plans and aspirations in place to increase significantly pupils' community involvement when they are located in their new building.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Knowle DGE to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received six completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	4	67	0	0	1	17	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	67	2	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	50	2	33	1	17	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	5	83	1	17	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knowle DGE, Knowle, Bristol, BS4 1NN

Thank you for the welcome you gave me and my colleague when we visited your school recently. You behaved well, and were very polite and friendly to us. We really enjoyed seeing your work.

Knowle DGE is a good school. These are some of its strengths:

- you are cared for very well by committed adults
- systems like mentoring help you to improve your behaviour
- you make good progress and leave school with appropriate qualifications
- you have a wide range of different and interesting things to do
- the management of the school works hard to keep improving things.

There are a few things that could be better. We have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve some of the teaching so that all teaching is as good as the best lessons we watched. Also, attendance is not good enough at Knowle. The school has been working hard to help you attend school but there is still more to be done, and you need to play your part in this and come to school regularly.

During our time with you, we were lucky to visit your new school building and thought it was fantastic. It is clear you will have lots of new opportunities when you move in and we are sure that this will make Knowle even better.

We hope that you enjoy the new school and the new facilities, and have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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