

# Inspection of Knowle Church of England Primary Academy

Kixley Lane, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands B93 0JE

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Matthew Stonehill. The academy is overseen by a board of governors chaired by Sarah Covington.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Knowle Church of England Primary Academy as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Patience, gentleness and kindness lie at the heart of Knowle CofE Primary Academy. A strong Christian ethos underpins relationships and expectations. Pupils are happy to attend school because they believe staff care for them.

Parents, carers and staff want the very best for every pupil. The school has set a high expectation that all pupils will experience 'Life in all its fullness'. Pupils learn well. Most quickly acquire and understand the important knowledge they need.

Caring relationships promote a sense of calm and self-control. This is a peaceful and purposeful environment. When pupils need extra help to get the most from their time at school, staff act quickly to help them. Pupils, parents and staff agree that behaviour is strong across the school. As a result, this is a kind and respectful environment where pupils feel safe and are safe.

This school enriches the lives of its pupils and develops a sense of responsibility and pride in the community. An impressive range of clubs, such as gymnastics, musical theatre, cheerleading and others, help pupils develop hobbies and interests. There are frequent opportunities to support such charities as the local food bank or Royal British Legion, and these help pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Recently, there have been significant changes to the leadership of Knowle. A new leadership team has brought a refreshed enthusiasm to the school. Supported by a dedicated and supportive governing body, leaders understand what the school is good at and know what they need to do to make it even better. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel that the school is well led and managed and that they are well supported.

In many subjects, the curriculum maps out what pupils need to learn within and across year groups, including the early years. In these instances, the curriculum is well ordered, which enables pupils to build their level of understanding from Nursery to Year 6. This is particularly well done in reading, mathematics and physical education (PE). In other subjects, the written intent about how knowledge and skills should be built on from the early years and into Year 1 is not yet in place.

Class staff work hard to ensure that sequences of lessons in different subjects build pupils' knowledge. Subject leaders work with class teams to advise them on what pupils should learn and how they would learn it best. There is consistency across all classes on how teachers provide opportunities for pupils to build knowledge over time.

In most cases, teachers check what pupils learn during lessons and adapt their approaches when needed. For example, teachers use creative ways to get a sense if all pupils understand the lesson's intended aim. However, there are some cases

where this is not as strong, and teachers do not routinely check that all pupils have a sense of whether they have achieved the intended outcome of the lesson.

Reading is a strength of the school. From the early years, there is a strong plan and expectation for how children will learn phonics and be able to build these into words. Opportunities to build fluency, expression and intonation are well planned. Pupils experience a wide range of different genres and styles of written text. Older pupils talk confidently about such authors as Louis Sachar, J.K. Rowling and other genres of books.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a real strength of the school. A highly skilled team around each child works hard with parents, staff and specialist services to assess needs and put the right provision in place. A small group of parents raised concerns through the free-text service and Ofsted Parent View about the support for children with SEND. However, inspectors found that when pupils need help, they get the right support to overcome any barriers to learning.

A strong sense of responsibility and care permeates all aspects of this school. Staff care for pupils, and pupils respond in kind. Pupils whom inspectors spoke to were happy to be at school. When attendance drops, the school acts swiftly to ensure that pupils return quickly. Consequently, attendance is high, and the small number of pupils who do not attend often enough is reducing over time.

The support for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Lessons in personal, social, health and economic education develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe, be healthy and take an active role in the community. The school's 'SMILE' programme helps pupils develop skills to maintain positive mental health and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, the curriculum starts in Year 1 and does not build on what pupils have learned in the early years. In these instances, written plans do not clearly define how learning links to and builds on learning from the early years. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, the written curriculum intent in Year 1 builds on what pupils have learned in the early years.
- In some lessons, teachers do not routinely check on what pupils have learned and understood from that lesson. This results in some pupils not being ready for the next steps in their learning. The school should ensure that all staff are skilled in and aware of the school's assessment systems and implement them consistently.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139457
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290598
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	471
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sarah Covington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Stonehill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.knowle.solihull.sch.uk">www.knowle.solihull.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new principal took up post in September 2023, having previously served as a senior leader at the school.
- A new vice principal was appointed in September 2023.
- A new school business manager joined the senior leadership team in September 2023.
- The current chair of governors took up post in January 2021.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, art, history and PE. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught. A meeting was also held with the science subject leader.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority. A conversation was also held with members of the governing body.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Donna O Toole	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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