

Inspection of Knockhall Primary School

Eynsford Road, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9RF

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

Knockhall Primary School is on the right tracks. Frequent changes of leaders and staff have been unsettling for everyone. The school is now more stable and a much happier place. The community is coming closer together. A magnificent 300 families came to the recent opening of the early years building and fun day.

Pupils feel safe. Most pupils and parents say that the school tackles and stops any bullying. Some say this has really improved.

The school is now a much calmer place than it has been in the past. It is a place where pupils can learn most of the time. However, pupils think that behaviour still needs to be better. Leaders and inspectors agree.

Leaders want the best academically for all pupils, but they know that getting pupils to do English and mathematics all day will not work. Instead, they make sure that pupils have lots of opportunities to grow and develop as people too. Many pupils take up the varied music, art and sport opportunities during and after the school day. Pupils are also proud of their charity fundraising. And, when things get tough, spending time with Betsy the dog is a great help!

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

Parents say that the school has got better since Woodland Academy Trust took over. Officially, it then became a new school. In reality, the school has existed for many years. This meant that new leaders did not start with a blank canvas. It has taken time, patience and determination to sort out some of the problems that this caused.

The trust is ambitious for all pupils. Slowly but surely, this is helping to raise everyone's expectations of what pupils can achieve. Leaders know that pupils still do not achieve well enough, but they are moving the school in the right direction. They particularly want to improve the life chances of disadvantaged pupils.

This September, leaders launched a new curriculum. With staff, they have thought about what they want to achieve. They have made sensible decisions about what order to teach things. However, this detail is further forward in some subjects than others.

Teachers are at the very first stages of bringing this new curriculum to life in the classroom. Leaders know that staff will need more training to teach the curriculum well all the time. There are already strengths. For example, in physical education (PE), teaching builds on what pupils can already do.

The teaching of phonics and early reading are not good. Pupils that fall behind do not catch up quickly. Leaders recently appointed to put this right understand what they need to do. For example, staff have started to match pupils' reading books

better to their phonic ability.

The majority of pupils do learn to read well. Some are genuinely enthusiastic about the books they read. The trust has invested in providing more books in the library and 'book nooks'.

Things are already going well in mathematics. Leaders began with mathematics because they identified it as the weakest. They have made a big difference. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound, including in early years. Teachers help pupils understand mathematics concepts and show them clearly how they work. Pupils learn mathematics well as they move through the school.

In the past, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not had the support they need. When the trust took over, there was a real muddle about who the pupils with SEND were. It has taken a long time to get to the bottom of this.

The situation for pupils with SEND is getting better. Their needs are being more accurately identified, including children just starting in early years. Increasingly, they receive the right support. Recently, the trust has allocated more leadership capacity to speed up the rate of improvement.

Most pupils are positive about school. Many behave well, but some pupils often switch off in lessons, including in early years. This sometimes distracts others. The brand-new behaviour policy has only been in place for a very short time.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Early years children learn how to share and cooperate. Older pupils are taught about people, religions and cultures that they might not otherwise experience. Many get involved in things like the edible garden project, being an 'eco warrior', or raising money through 'Race for Life'.

From the start of early years, parents are warmly encouraged to be part of school life. Quite a few parents told inspectors that they would like the school to tell them more about what is happening, especially when things change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to spot concerns about pupils' welfare and exactly what to do when this happens. Leaders keep records that make it easy to spot any worrying patterns. They support families where they can. Leaders ask other agencies to help keep pupils safe where necessary. They pay close attention to the safety of the high number of pupils that join and leave the school throughout the year.

As part of learning how to keep themselves safe, pupils enjoy visits to the school by people such as the police, fire service and St John Ambulance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the majority of pupils learn to read, provision is not good enough for those who struggle. Leaders and staff have begun work to identify the phonics which pupils should know but do not. They must press on with this work to find the gaps in the knowledge of any pupil who is behind with their reading. They should make sure that teachers use this information, with the phonics programme, to help pupils catch up quickly.
- Several new teachers have joined the school this year, some at the start of their careers. Leaders should prioritise the work already started to ensure that all adults who teach phonics are knowledgeable and skilled, so that more children do not fall behind.
- The new phonics leader knows that it is helpful if pupils' reading books contain words made up of the phonics pupils know or are currently learning. Leaders should build on the good start made this year beginning to match pupils' reading books closely to their phonics stage. This is so that pupils can use their newly acquired phonics knowledge repeatedly, so it sticks.
- Leaders' intentions behind the new curriculum are sound. They should continue to work to define more precisely the sequence of what is taught for each year group and subject.
- There is much work to do to ensure that the curriculum is taught well across the school so that pupils know and remember more over time. As planned, leaders should improve teachers' subject knowledge and teaching expertise. This work should be tackled in priority order to take account of teacher workload and well-being.
- While the school's provision for pupils with SEND is better than it was, it is still not good. Leaders should continue to prioritise this vital work so that the needs of pupils with SEND are fully met and they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are improving, but leaders recognise that there is still more work to do. They should keep a close check that the new behaviour policy makes the difference that they hope for over time. They should also adjust it, if necessary, so that pupils' behaviour supports everyone to learn well.
- Most parents recognise the improvements that the school is making. However, many would like communication with them to be improved, particularly about the changes made and reasons for them. The school has an imaginative range of ways it engages with the community. It should continue to build on this work to make sure that it wins the full confidence of parents.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145014
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111104
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Deborah Absalom
Headteacher	Dan Morrow (Executive Headteacher) Sukjinder Tiwana (Head of School)
Website	www.knockhallprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school opened as an academy sponsored by the Woodland Academy Trust in January 2017. Prior to that, from August 2014, the school was sponsored by Lilac Sky Academy Trust. Ofsted did not carry out a full inspection during that period. The last time that the school on this site was inspected was in July 2013, when it was judged to require special measures.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with trust and school leaders, including the chief executive officer who is also the executive headteacher. We held discussions with the head of school, those responsible for leading provision for pupils with SEND, staff and pupils. We also met three governors that serve on the local governing body. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- As part of our work to understand the quality of education the school is providing, we looked in detail at a handful of subjects. The subjects we agreed with leaders to focus on were phonics and early reading, mathematics, science, PE and

personal, social and health education (PSHE). We spoke with the leaders for these subjects, looked at curriculum documents, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and teachers. We also spoke with leaders before and during the inspection to make sure that we understood how these subjects fit into the overall quality of education provided by the school.

- We made careful checks on the school's arrangements for safeguarding. We held detailed conversations with those with designated responsibilities for safeguarding at the time of the inspection. We also explored the knowledge and understanding of other staff. We reviewed a range of the school's records to test out how the school safeguards pupils in practice and followed up on the experiences of specific individuals. We scrutinised the single central record of the suitability of adults to work with children.
- We considered carefully the responses to our inspection surveys completed by parents and staff. We also chatted informally with pupils and staff during the inspection. As well as meeting several groups of pupils to talk about their work, we met with two groups of pupils to talk about their general experiences and opinions of school.
- We observed the daily life of the school beyond lessons, inside and out.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

Stephanie Scutter

Ofsted Inspector

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