

Knowl Hill School

28 September 2016

School Lane, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey GU24 0JN

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)

- The arrangements to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare are effective. Leaders have made safeguarding everyone's priority. Staff receive regular training and updates that ensure they know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. When appropriate, the school works well with other professionals to take action to keep pupils safe.
- There is a distinct culture of vigilance and care. For example, leaders recently recognised that some pupils' use of technology at home placed them at risk. Staff worked closely with parents and the police to help pupils learn about these risks and how to stay safe. Consequently, pupils say that they feel safe and are well cared for at school.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. Leaders have recently reviewed the policy in the light of recent changes to the guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. As a result, the policy meets current requirements.
- The single central record of checks on staff suitability complies with requirements. There are robust measures in place to check staff prior to them joining the school. Leaders also ensure that visitors are supervised effectively.
- Leaders have taken action to improve safety around the school. For example, at the end of the day pupils now wait in the school hall for taxi drivers to collect them. This has reduced congestion and risks to pupils from crossing the road outside the school.
- Since the last inspection, there have been no instances that would require school leaders to make a notification to the Disclosure and Barring Service regarding the actions of a member of staff. The school is aware of its duty to refer any person deemed unsuitable to work with children.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b) and 9(c)

- Leaders have set high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Over time, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing. The behaviour policy sets out the school's 'respect' charter for pupils and provides clear examples of the sanctions for misbehaviour. Staff regularly discuss scenarios that help them to make consistent use of the sanctions. Staff say that leaders support them well to manage pupils' behaviour and that everyone knows what to do. As a result, the behaviour policy is implemented effectively.

- Staff record individual pupils' behaviour in detail. The records contain information about each pupil's needs, and strategies to support them. Staff add information about any incidents of poor behaviour and also highlight examples of success. These records also show the sanctions that are used.
- Parents have at least weekly communication with their child's tutor via email, in person or a telephone conversation. Staff share information with parents about pupils' behaviour as soon as possible. This helps parents to work closely with the school and strengthens the impact of the behaviour policy.
- Around the school, pupils are courteous and sensible. In the playground, pupils and adults interacted well, demonstrating strong and respectful relationships. A range of activities are available at breaktimes to help pupils make the right choices and behave well.

Paragraph 10

- Leaders take bullying seriously. The anti-bullying policy reflects this. It sets out clear steps for parents and pupils to follow if they need to report concerns. There are also opportunities within the curriculum, through assemblies and anti-bullying weeks to raise pupils' awareness of bullying. Around the school, displays also remind pupils what to do if they are being bullied.
- Records of incidents of poor behaviour show that leaders take action to deal with bullying and name-calling. Leaders take appropriate action and rightly impose sanctions to address bullying. As a result, both pupils and staff report that incidents of bullying are rare.
- There are many systems in place to support pupils. Therapists provide an 'open door' for pupils to come and share concerns. There is a 'girls' club' that helps them to forge and manage friendships, as there are fewer girls in the school. Pupils report that the school is friendly. One pupil said, 'Anyone can join in'. Consequently, pupils are confident that, although problems are rare, staff will help them when needed.

Paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(c)

- Risk assessments identify appropriate actions to take to promote safety. The health and safety and educational visits policies provide detailed risk assessment procedures and guidance. Risk assessments show that staff take into account pupils' individual needs and behaviours, travel and venue arrangements when planning activities.
- Leaders ensure that risks are managed well. The director responsible for health and safety monitors risks assessments rigorously. Staff know that risk assessments must be completed on time and meet the standards set out in the policy for an off-site activity to take place. Leaders also check and review other risk assessments routinely.
- All of the standards that have been checked in this part meet requirements.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii) and 33(k)

- The complaints policy is published on the school's website. It sets out clear timescales for the management of a complaint. There are informal and formal procedures to follow.

- The policy sets out clear stages for the formal procedures. There is provision for formal complaints to be heard by a panel of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the complaint. The policy rightly stipulates that one of the members of the panel must be independent of the management and running of the school. It also states that parents have the right to be accompanied at a panel hearing if they wish. The policy makes clear that any findings of a panel must be available to the complainant and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- Leaders have ensured that copies of complaints are confidential and available for inspection on the school premises. Records show that complaints have been handled in accordance with the policy. In the first instance, there are attempts to resolve complaints informally that include ongoing dialogue with complainants. Records show how formal complaints have been resolved and the action that has been taken as a result of each investigation. Leaders follow all other relevant policies when dealing with complaints.
- All of the standards that have been checked in this part meet requirements.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)

- The headteacher provides effective leadership. She has set out her ambitions for the school and ensured that staff understand and share these expectations. Staff are enthusiastic and committed; many cited strong teamwork as a strength of the school. Staff are confident that the school is improving.
- The directors hold leaders to account. They have had suitable experience and training that enables them to confidently check safeguarding and risk assessment arrangements routinely.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards checked in this inspection have been met, including the effective promotion of pupils' well-being. Consequently, the standards that have been checked in this part meet requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	125436
DfE registration number	936/6554
Inspection number	10020634

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Knowl Hill Foundation
Chair	Norma Todd
Headteacher	Jan Lusty
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,204–£10,520
Telephone number	01483 797032
Website	www.knowlhillschool.org.uk
Email address	office@khs.education
Date of previous standard inspection	4–6 November 2014 and 28 January 2015

Information about this school

- Knowl Hill is an independent day special school for pupils with specific learning difficulties, principally dyslexia. Some pupils have difficulties associated with autistic spectrum disorders or speech, language and communication needs. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs.
- The school was opened in 1984 and has places for up to 60 pupils aged between seven and 16 years.
- The school aims to be 'a happy nurturing environment, where our children can flourish and achieve'. The school recognises that pupils have unique gifts and talents and seeks to build on these strengths, offering a curriculum that is 'tailored to pupils' particular gifts, whilst teaching all subjects in a more creative way'.

- The previous headteacher left the school at the start of the last academic year. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2016, having led the school since September jointly with the existing deputy headteacher.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The last standard inspection took place in November 2014 and January 2015. The school was judged to require improvement. All of the independent school standards were judged to be met.

Information about this inspection

- This was an emergency inspection commissioned by the Department for Education as a result of an anonymous complaint. The complaint raised concerns about the leadership and management of the school, safeguarding and safety, pupils' behaviour, bullying and the manner in which complaints are handled. This inspection considered all the independent school standards relating to these matters.
- As an emergency inspection, it was conducted without notice.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, three directors and a group of staff. The inspector also spoke to some parents on the telephone.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils to consider their views of the school. This included discussions about the work of the school to keep them safe and protect them from bullying and their views of pupils' behaviour. The inspector also observed pupils' behaviour around the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, records of incidents of poor behaviour and complaints.

Inspection team

Caroline Dulon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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