

# Knowl Hill Church of England Primary Academy

Bath Road, Knowl Hill, Reading, Berkshire RG10 9UX

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Knowl Hill Academy gives all its pupils an outstanding education and provides a very high level of care. The headteacher and staff make this a very special place to learn and work. Everyone is valued, respected and works as a team.
- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. She insists on the highest standards across the school and leads by example. The strong senior leadership team share her ambition for every pupil to achieve their best.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know that the most able pupils in some classes would benefit from a greater level of challenge in mathematics.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured learners and achieve very well. Over the last three years, pupils' achievement has exceeded that of other pupils nationally.
- Accurate records of pupils' achievement across all subjects show that current pupils are on track to make outstanding progress this year. The use of this information by all staff is a strength and means that no pupil is left behind in their learning.
- Teaching is very effective as a result of strong leadership. Leaders monitor and evaluate teaching and its impact on learning on a regular basis. They act quickly to eradicate any weak teaching. The excellent working partnership across the trust means that all staff receive high-quality support and challenge.
- The early years is led very well. Children benefit from a well-organised and stimulating environment, and make outstanding progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils love coming to school and cannot wait to start the day. They are very proud of their school and enjoy the very wide-ranging learning opportunities that the curriculum provides.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and care for each other well. Many have leadership responsibilities that enable them to make a positive contribution to school life.
- The large majority of parents are very supportive of the school. They believe that their children are well cared for and progress well in their learning.
- Governance is exceptionally strong. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and keep the best interests of the pupils at the heart of what they do. They are meticulous in checking that leaders are doing their jobs well.

## **Full report**

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

- Ensure that the teaching of mathematics is challenging for all pupils, particularly the most able.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher provides outstanding and altruistic leadership. Her calm and measured approach is infectious and her absolute commitment to every child in the trust is to be commended. Her work to support the transition of pupils and staff from the predecessor school to Knowl Hill Academy has been done sensitively and with the best interests of the children and their families in mind.
- The headteacher is highly respected. Parents, pupils and colleagues comment on her strong and fair leadership. They recognise how hard she works to make Knowl Hill Academy the very best it can be.
- The headteacher is an active member of the trust and is committed to sharing best practice. She makes the most of every opportunity to extend her own learning as well as ensuring the development of her staff. Staff are highly motivated and engage in the continuous improvement of their own performance, whether through formal training or other professional conversations.
- Since her appointment three years ago, the headteacher's decisive actions have meant that every pupil is safe and well cared for and benefits from an outstanding education. Her unswerving focus on doing the right thing for all pupils has meant that their achievement has improved and is now excellent.
- Senior leaders know their school exceptionally well. They make good use of all the information they have about each pupil to ensure that their needs are thoroughly met and that pupils achieve well. Assessment is rigorous and carefully planned in line with the school's curriculum. This means that pupils' current learning is checked well and any gaps quickly filled. Teachers make good use of other schools in the trust to check the accuracy of their assessments through regular moderation meetings.
- The headteacher is very skilful at building on staff's strengths and has recently appointed two senior leaders. Their commitment to improving outcomes for pupils is seen in the very effective support they give to teachers and support staff across the academy trust. The recently appointed mathematics lead is already offering very high quality support across different classes.
- An exciting and engaging curriculum supports learners in making exceptional progress across every subject. There are high-quality opportunities for learning across all year groups, both in lessons and through trips.
- There is also a range of extra-curricular activities on offer at school from Zumba to gardening and all pupils take part in an annual drama and music performance for parents. Teachers also provide additional support for individual pupils outside of lessons to help them to understand learning which they have not quite grasped.
- Knowl Hill is a very inclusive school where everyone is respected and differences are valued. The development of British and Christian values is strong and contributes directly to the exceptional conduct of pupils. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is outstanding.
- Pupils show a very high level of understanding about their own culture and beliefs and reflect well on those of others. At the heart of this school is the belief that everyone

has the right to express their opinion fully, and that they should be listened to. For example, in a Year 3 religious education lesson pupils learning about Tudor times were asked to consider how the power of the king was used to deny people access to the church and the Bible. They were prompted to reflect on how this made them feel. Pupils were able to express their views extremely coherently when adding their points to the discussion. The teacher's careful questioning engaged pupils in a very high standard of debate.

- Pupils from across the school are elected to sit on different councils to represent others' views and take special responsibility for important elements of learning. For example, the newly appointed 'collective worship council' plays a key role in preparing for worship and in leading prayers. During the inspection, a member of the council led prayers. The effect of this was calming and powerful and prepared everyone ready for the day ahead.
- Leaders and governors have made sound decisions about the spending of additional government funds. They publish full reports on each area of spending on the school's website. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very good support and consequently make rapid progress, catching up with their peers. The physical education and sports premium has made a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being. Next term's focus on superheroes is planned to provide a range of opportunities to further develop healthy living and fun activities to challenge pupils to become more physically active.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is of the highest quality and provides challenge to leaders to constantly improve. Governors are dedicated to making the school as good as it can be. They make full use of the headteacher's reports to probe deeply into the progress that all pupils make, keeping a particular eye on specific groups. They are keen to develop their work further.
- The structure of the trust enables governors to work together and learn from one another. The chair and vice-chair are both directors of the trust and represent Knowl Hill pupils and staff ably at directors' meetings.
- Governors are highly visible in school and contribute in many ways to supporting the school's improvement. Consequently, staff, parents and pupils know who they are and understand their roles.
- Governors understand and fulfil their statutory duties well, particularly those around safeguarding and welfare. They are rigorously held to account by the trust.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and welfare is of paramount importance and leaders are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are well cared for. Systems across the trust are efficient and used consistently. Records are diligently completed and securely kept. Staff and governors are well trained to recognise any concerns they may have about pupils' well-being and to follow the trust's policies and procedures. They do this without exception.

- The headteacher and the office manager know pupils and families well. They have built positive relationships over time and through open and honest communication and ensure that any concerns are properly addressed. Leaders maintain strong links with external agencies and make good use of their resources and support to help individual pupils. The headteacher is not afraid to challenge decisions made by other professionals if they are not in the best interests of the pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Outstanding**

- The high expectations of senior leaders, supported by high-quality training for staff and rigorous and effective monitoring, have resulted in outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. The headteacher knows that in order to achieve the best outcomes, pupils need to receive high-quality teaching from teachers and teaching assistants. She has worked hard to achieve this. The recent additional senior leadership support is further developing the school's skilled professionals who are not afraid to take risks and challenge their own practice.
- Across both key stages, lessons are planned well within the trust. This ensures that pupils' needs are met effectively. There is a strong focus placed on providing pupils with a chance to apply their skills and gain as deep an understanding of the subject matter as possible. Teachers make sure that pupils who have not understood are supported and are not held back in their learning.
- Teachers demonstrate a deep understanding of and real enthusiasm for their subjects. They pitch lessons well to engage all learners and support pupils' progress effectively. Teachers skilfully use questioning and prompts to extend pupils' thinking and constantly challenge them to try something new.
- Pupils receive helpful feedback about their learning because teachers are meticulous in checking pupils' work and their understanding as lessons progress. Pupils are clear about what they need to do next to improve their learning and teachers give them time in lessons to reflect and respond. At the end of each day, pupils are given time to share their achievements and explain what they have learned. This deliberate policy means that children leave school feeling positive and are able to talk meaningfully to their families about their day.
- Pupils are resilient and independent learners who are not afraid to make mistakes. They love a challenge in a lesson and know that by working together they can learn a great deal. Pupils choose an appropriate task from three offered by the teacher, many of which require levels of skill and knowledge above that typically expected for their age. For example, Year 6 pupils tackled problems based on using a protractor to measure angles. By discussing the options in their groups and trying out ideas on their whiteboards, they came to a satisfactory conclusion. They say how much they enjoyed the challenge of working through the 'outstanding' problem even though they agreed it was hard.
- Pupils enjoy being taught by teachers other than their own class teacher, particularly in art and computing. They recognise that different teachers have different strengths and this helps them to progress more quickly.
- Pupils read confidently and are equipped with a range of strategies to help them understand more challenging vocabulary and phrases. Children in the early years get

an excellent start to learning phonics. High-quality support continues in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils develop into fluent readers.

- Workbooks and displays are well presented and pupils value their work. Across all subjects pupils write at length, working hard to use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Every fortnight, writing from each class is displayed and examples are shared by all pupils to extend their own learning. Pupils share each other's learning and this helps to broaden their own experiences. Pupils are very proud of their work and enjoy sharing it with parents, who are regularly invited into school.
- The new mathematics leader leads by example. She supports all staff, helping them to further develop pupils' reasoning skills and encouraging a very high level of challenge in mathematics. She knows which teachers are less confident in doing this, and is currently supporting them to improve.
- Parents are very confident that their children are working hard and achieving well across the curriculum. Parental confidence in the quality of teaching is high.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- All pupils feel safe at Knowl Hill and their parents agree whole-heartedly.
- Staff receive high-quality training to help them to support pupils with emotional difficulties. The headteacher's insistence on dealing with any emotional barriers to learning at an early stage means that appropriate support is delivered swiftly. Learning well quickly becomes each pupil's focus.
- Pupils understand the dangers of all types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and are confident in how to stay safe. The school has very clear guidance about staying safe online and pupils explain the risks clearly. Furthermore, pupils do not have any concerns about bullying. This view is supported by the large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Pupils enjoy learning and work very hard because they want to succeed. They are excited about what they are learning next and enjoy the challenges that a new topic brings.
- Pupils continually develop high-level questioning and discussion skills which prepare them very well for the future, and develop their resilience in learning. They discuss questions like, 'Does it matter what we look like?' and, 'Should we always forgive?' They approach these types of discussions with huge sensitivity and take others' feelings into account well.
- Pupils and staff have the utmost respect for one another and together they embody the school's mission statement, 'Together we succeed.' Pupils play an active role in the local community in preparation for their life in modern Britain.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils conduct themselves well and are courteous and helpful.
- The behaviour policy is upheld consistently by all staff, and pupils know the rewards and consequences. Pupils are quite clear about the differences between right and wrong.
- School records of any poor behaviour are detailed and securely stored. Any low-level disruption is dealt with swiftly and pupils have time to reflect upon their actions and, if necessary, apologise. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding because learning is fun and challenging.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes and are very excited about the new castle that is being built for them. They can explain that the buddy bench is there so that nobody is left on their own. They are confident that there is always somebody to play with.
- Pupils attend school regularly because they want to learn and enjoy the company of their friends and teachers. They enjoy taking part in the many cultural events on offer, including singing in the choir and learning a musical instrument.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Over the past three years, pupils in each year group have made substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum including in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress has been greater than that made by other pupils nationally from the same starting points. These high standards have been achieved because the very effective headteacher has been relentless in her pursuit of outstanding teaching across the school – never accepting less than the best.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, do well at key stage 1 and key stage 2. Achievement is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of pupils being quickly assessed on entry to the school, and targeted support being put in place.
- The proportion of pupils that meet the expected standard in phonics has been above the national figure for the last three years. Disadvantaged pupils reach the expected standard by the end of key stage 1 because they receive high-quality additional help which is appropriate to their needs.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the national standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 exceeded national expectations. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and writing also exceeded national expectations. The current focus on raising the level of challenge in mathematics for all pupils is improving outcomes, particularly for most-able pupils. This means that more pupils are being stretched in mathematics and are working towards achieving the higher national standards by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' progress remained very strong in 2016 with significantly above-average progress scores in reading and above-average progress scores for writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books and on display in a range of subjects is of a high standard. It shows current pupils are making strong progress. Assessments made by

teachers are accurate. This means that work is planned appropriately to meet the needs of pupils and ensure they can move forward with their learning.

- Pupils are well equipped with the academic and personal resilience to enjoy their secondary schools.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- A flexible and innovative curriculum provides rich learning experiences for children. For example, one boy hearing a teaching assistant say that something was heavy asked what that meant. The teacher responded well, gathering the children around some scales so that they could investigate the weight of different objects, finding out which was the heaviest and which was the lightest. Children are encouraged regularly to ask questions and investigate for themselves.
- The indoor and outdoor environment is very well planned so that children have access to all different types of learning. Learning prompts hang from hoops above key activities to help to develop children's reading, speaking and listening skills when playing in a particular area of learning.
- The early years leader is passionate about every child's entitlement to high-quality provision. She works hard with her skilled team to ensure that each child is safe and happy and that their experiences in the early years help them to grow in confidence and learn quickly. The leader makes good use of any additional funding to improve the progress made by any vulnerable children.
- Phonics is taught very well and is a priority. Children quickly learn to identify the sounds letters make, blending sounds to form words – which some are able to place into sentences. Staff take every opportunity to use high-quality texts along with signs and written prompts to support the progress children make in learning to read well.
- Teaching from all adults in the early years is of a consistently high standard, ensuring that children make exceptional progress from a range of different starting points. For the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average. Current assessments indicate that more children than at the same point last year are on track to achieve a good level of development by the time they move into Year 1.
- Parents are very positive about the progress their children are making in the early years. One parent commented he could not believe how much his child had learned in such a short period. Parents are kept informed about their children's achievements and progress, and enjoy coming into the classroom to see what the children have done. Their celebratory writing wall is full of high-quality, independent and creative writing.
- Children are very confident and are eager to learn and share. They engage with each other and adults very well. They leave the Reception class fully equipped for the challenges of key stage 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	141295
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10032940

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cynthia Pitteway
Headteacher	Mrs Nichole Bourner
Telephone number	01628 822584
Website	<a href="http://www.knowlhillschool.co.uk">www.knowlhillschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@knowhill.org">office@knowhill.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized school. The school became a member of The Ashley Hill multi-academy trust in September 2014. The school has a designated religious character.
- The school serves an area of much lower-than-average social deprivation. Pupil turnover is low.
- A lower-than-average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The school has a lower-than-average number of pupils from 'other ethnic backgrounds'.

- The number of pupils for whom English is not their first language is well below the national figure.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- There are seven classes ranging from Reception to Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector and the headteacher observed lessons together across the school and in a range of subjects.
- The inspector worked in partnership with the school's senior leaders when analysing information about the school. The inspector looked at pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the development plan and monitoring and evaluation records. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspector walked around the school with the lower-school leader to find out more about pupils' work from displays and extra-curricular activities.
- The inspector spent time on the playground at playtime, listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books alongside senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teaching assistants.
- The inspector met with three members of the governing body including the chair and the vice-chair, and also met with a local authority representative and a diocesan adviser.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with the inspector, who also spoke informally with pupils around the school.
- The inspector took account of 11 staff questionnaires. Forty-three responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered along with parents' written comments. The inspector also had discussions with 11 parents before and after school.

## Inspection team

Sarah Varnom, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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