

Inspection of The Knaphill Lower School

Chobham Road, Knaphill, Woking, Surrey GU21 2SX

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel safe and happy. Pupils are kind and polite to others. They know there is always an adult they can talk to if they feel worried or upset. One pupil said, 'We don't let big worries grow in our head because they can easily make us sad.' Pupils say bullying is not a problem. If it happens, adults deal with it quickly.

Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the extra-curricular opportunities they experience. They enjoy school trips to the local river, sports tournaments in the community and after-school clubs, such as multi sports, drama and French. Pupils relish taking on positions of responsibility, such as being a member of the pupil parliament and the environment team. Playtimes are sociable occasions. Pupils look forward to catching up with their friends in the well-equipped outdoor gym or the busy mud kitchen.

Leaders want the best for all pupils and know what improvements are needed to the curriculum to help pupils to flourish and succeed. The acting headteachers, trustees and governors are determined to raise expectations for all pupils, which are not yet consistently high enough. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they should.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. However, leaders know that the quality of education needs to improve swiftly for all year groups, including early years. They have begun to make the necessary improvements.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, English and physical education (PE), leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. Teachers are well trained in these subjects. They skilfully use their subject knowledge to check and make sure that pupils' learning carefully builds on what they know already. For example, children in Reception were counting the treasure they found in the sandpit by arranging the 'gold coins' in order of their value from highest to lowest. However, in other subjects, such as art and history, the curriculum is not as effective. As a result, pupils, including children in early years, do not learn and achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have not ensured that teachers have the necessary expertise in all subjects. Teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have understood the important ideas before introducing new concepts. This means that pupils, including pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND), sometimes struggle to make links in their learning and are easily distracted. Consequently, they are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. One pupil explained, 'Our teachers don't always go through the lesson step by step and help us understand what we need to learn.'

Leaders rightly prioritise reading. They make sure that children are introduced to phonics from the moment they start school. The phonics programme is well sequenced. However, some staff do not deliver phonics effectively. Books are not always matched to the sounds pupils learn in lessons. This slows some pupils' ability to read with increased fluency and comprehension. Leaders are in the process of addressing these issues.

Leaders and staff carefully consider pupils' wider development. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and think about those less fortunate than themselves. They organise and run activities to raise funds for several charities, including the local homeless shelter. Pupils learn about different faiths, religions and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors know what the school does well and where improvements need to be made. However, they recognise that they need to focus their monitoring of the curriculum more sharply. They have identified that, in the past, they have not challenged leaders well enough about the quality of education. The trust provides valuable support and resources. The executive headteacher from the trust has brought much needed rigour and is driving key improvements. Leaders and staff are making positive use of the resources and expertise available.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant about the signs that a pupil may be at risk. They ensure that all staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding procedures. Staff are very knowledgeable about the community they serve. They are tenacious with following up concerns. They work effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable children and their families. The trust checks that the school keeps detailed records on the suitability of staff to work in the school. These records are organised well. Pupils have a secure knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum in all foundation subjects is well sequenced or coherent. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Leaders need to continue to develop the curriculum so that it clearly sets out the order in which all pupils and children in early years should learn the essential knowledge across all subjects.
- Across the foundation curriculum, staff have variable pedagogical knowledge. Leaders should make sure that teachers are confident and skilled in the content they are delivering. This will ensure that all pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

- Most staff do not teach phonics programme effectively. They do not always check that all pupils learn the right sounds and blends. The books that pupils read do not help them to read with increased fluency and comprehension. Leaders need to make sure that all staff are trained to deliver phonics effectively and that the books pupils read match the sounds they learn in lessons.
- Governors do not challenge leaders well enough to check for the impact of strategic actions to improve the quality of education, which includes the achievement of pupils with SEND. Governors need to hold leaders to account more effectively.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	147428
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10199375
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of board of trustees	Victor Shipp
Headteacher	Joanna Concannon
Website	www.knaphill-lower.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In March 2015, the school federated with the local junior school to become part of the Federation of Knaphill Schools.
- In July 2020, the school joined Bright Futures Learning Trust.
- The two acting headteachers had been in role for two weeks at the time of the inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the acting headteachers, the executive headteacher from the trust, leaders, staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with the chair of the board of trustees and the trust's chief executive officer.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered responses to the confidential survey for staff and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to the pupils' survey. They met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, pupil premium and catch-up funding plans.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard a selection of pupils read.

Inspection team

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