

# Knollmead Primary School

Knollmead, Tolworth, Kingston upon Thames KT5 9QP

## Inspection dates

22–23 February 2017  
and 17 May 2017

| Overall effectiveness                        | Requires improvement     |
|--|--------------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Requires improvement     |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement     |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Good                     |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Requires improvement     |
| Early years provision                        | Good                     |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Challenges in staffing, including the recruitment of skilled leaders, have hampered leaders' work to ensure that all pupils receive a good standard of education. Many actions are too recent to have had a sustained impact on raising standards for pupils in key stage 2.
- Additional support did not help disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 to catch up and achieve the standards expected in reading and writing in 2016. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils mirrored the weak achievement of other pupils at the end of Year 6.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils complete tasks that do not help them to build swiftly on their existing skills and knowledge. Teachers praise pupils for getting the correct answer, but do not routinely challenge pupils.
- The quality of teaching over time is variable. Consequently, pupils' outcomes in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 have been poor. In 2015 and 2016, the progress of Year 6 pupils in these subjects was significantly below the national average.
- Continued variability in the quality of teaching means some pupils in key stage 2 have ground to make up before they fully overcome their previous underachievement. However, current pupils are making better progress than in the past. This includes the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher's determined leadership has steered the school well through challenging times. She is acutely aware of what needs to be better and has a clear vision for the school's future direction.
- Leaders and staff share the executive headteacher's high expectations. Together, they are working with a greater sense of urgency to secure improvements.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at Knollmead. They behave well and are keen to succeed in their learning.
- Pupils' achievement in key stage 1 is good. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving age-expected standards was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In mathematics, pupils' outcomes are improving at a more rapid pace than in English.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the resourced provisions, are well catered for.
- The early years classes are safe, happy places. High-quality teaching ensures that children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

## Full report

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

- In order to raise pupils' achievement in reading and writing in key stage 2 so that all groups of pupils learn and achieve equally well, leaders should:
  - provide teachers with precise guidance on how to improve their practice
  - expect and secure high-quality teaching throughout the school so that pupils' skills and knowledge are routinely stretched through well-chosen activities and questions
  - make sure that teaching typically meets the needs of different groups, including those that are disadvantaged and the most able
  - promote better reading skills by encouraging pupils to make more ambitious choices in the books they read
  - ensure that the curriculum and teaching provide pupils with frequent opportunities to practise and apply their writing skills.
- Leaders and governors should secure rapid and sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes, particularly for pupils in key stage 2, the most able and those that are disadvantaged.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because leaders and governors have not secured sufficient improvement in pupils' outcomes in key stage 2. This is particularly evident in reading and writing, where pupils' achievement was weak in 2015 and 2016. Since the school opened, the pace of improvement has been slow. Leaders' efforts to drive improvements have been hindered by turbulence in staffing, including difficulties recruiting permanent senior and middle leaders.
- In the past, leaders have not provided teachers with precise feedback to help secure effective teaching. As a result of recent changes, leaders now monitor the quality of teaching frequently and are quick to spot where practice needs to be better. External support, both from within the trust and from the local authority, is helping leaders to sharpen the accuracy of their judgements.
- Over time, the impact of pupil premium funding has been variable, as the pattern of disadvantaged pupils' achievement across the school shows. Leaders have begun to undertake more careful analysis of how best to use the pupil premium funding and plan support that is more closely matched to pupils' needs.
- In the past, leaders have not routinely checked the performance of some groups of pupils, including the most able pupils and pupils not in the resourced provisions but who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. New assessment systems are helping leaders to identify groups of pupils who are not doing as well as they should. This includes the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who are the most able disadvantaged. However, it is too early to judge whether this new approach will generate sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes.
- The new curriculum programme ensures that pupils are developing age-expected skills and knowledge. Teachers are also increasingly using this programme to plan opportunities which inspire pupils to write. Leaders draw on teaching expertise from within the trust to ensure that the teaching of subjects such as French and physical education is of good quality. However, implementation of the new curriculum is not fully embedded throughout the school.
- The strong, determined leadership of the executive headteacher has provided stability and guided the school through some challenging times. The new leadership team have the right level of skills and experience to drive improvements at a more rapid pace.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in a range of activities beyond the classroom. Trips and visits to museums and theatres contribute well to pupils' personal development. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about how these activities inspire them. For example, one pupil described how a recent trip had helped him to be 'more confident trying something new'.
- Pupils are prepared well for growing up in modern Britain. Pupils learn about world religions and respect the beliefs of others. British values are well promoted. Pupils understand how democracy works in practice through the voting process for membership of the school council.

- The school contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a whole-school assembly an account of how one child improved a picture of a butterfly showed how perseverance helps pupils to improve. Pupils were engaged, and showed through their comments that they understand the school's values and feel part of its community.
- Leaders make appropriate use of the primary sports funding, which has enabled the introduction of new sports clubs and increased pupils' access to competitive events.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, whether they are placed in one of the resourced provisions or not, is spent wisely. The resourced provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder and/or severe learning difficulties offers those who attend a good quality of education in a nurturing and protected environment. Leadership of the resourced provision for hearing impaired children is effective, and the integration of these pupils into the mainstream classes is well managed.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have contributed effectively to steering the school through some turbulent times. Sensibly, governors have relied on experienced leaders from within the trust to bolster leadership capacity. This includes commissioning support from those with experience in administration and health and safety. This is helping leaders to focus their efforts on improving teaching and raising standards.
- Governors have an increasingly accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. They are aware that some aspects of their work need sharpening, in particular the way they hold leaders to account for the impact of the pupil premium funding.
- Governors' training in keeping pupils safe is up to date. As a result, they ask leaders the right questions about whether the school fulfils all of its duties with regard to safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding policies are relevant to the school and up to date. Background checks on those who work with pupils are carried out carefully. Leaders make sure that they know where absent pupils are in order to keep them safe.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to the online survey confirmed that they are confident that their children are safe at the school. Staff know who to turn to if they have a safeguarding concern. Training in safeguarding is up to date. Leaders work in effective partnership with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Risks are carefully considered, both within school and before pupils are taken out on trips. Adults regularly check the site to ensure it is secure. Pupils told inspectors that the regular fire drills make them feel safe and that there is always an adult they can turn to if they feel worried.

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

- The quality of teaching over time is variable, especially in reading and writing. This limits pupils' progress, particularly between key stages 1 and 2.
- Teachers do not always take into account pupils' different starting points when planning learning. Pupils sometimes complete tasks which do not help them to build quickly on what they already know or can do well. Consequently, tasks are sometimes too easy for the most able pupils and too difficult for others.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps them to explain learning clearly. Pupils learn to understand and use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. However, teaching does not routinely challenge pupils and help them to deepen their understanding.
- In key stage 2, sometimes pupils' efforts to write at length and present their work neatly are hampered by pupils' spelling errors and poorly developed handwriting. This is in part due to weak teaching in the past, which has not provided pupils with secure foundations in phonics knowledge and fluent handwriting skills. An emphasis on building pupils' vocabulary, together with focused teaching of grammar and punctuation, is helping current pupils in key stage 2 to produce writing of better quality.
- Over time, older pupils have not acquired good reading skills or developed an enthusiasm for books. In response, this year leaders have raised the profile of reading across the school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their increased enjoyment of books and the importance of reading. However, older pupils are not adventurous in the choices of books they read. In guided literacy lessons, pupils are not routinely asked questions which stretch their comprehension skills. This limits the challenge for pupils, particularly the most able.
- In mathematics, tasks typically match pupils' needs more closely than in reading and writing. Emphasis is given to the development of pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils, including those who are the most able, are challenged by the problems they are set. For example, in a key stage 1 mathematics lesson pupils confidently used their arithmetic skills to find different ways of making 25p. Adults adapted the task for the most able by taking away different coins so pupils had to think carefully of other ways they could make the amount. Nevertheless, this improved approach is not fully embedded across the school.
- The quality of teaching in the early years and key stage 1 generally meets pupils' needs and this is reflected in pupils' stronger outcomes. Teaching is also strong in the resourced provision classes for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders and/or complex needs. In these classes, pupils make good progress in their learning because the teaching is personalised to each individual's needs.
- The two resourced provisions are highly valued by the parents of those who use them. In their observations inspectors confirmed the view of one parent who commented: 'The adults provide a caring and warm environment and structured learning, appropriate to the needs of the children. They are very responsive to input from parents and are very committed to the well-being and progress of the children.'

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are friendly and engage readily in conversation with visitors. They enjoy school. Playground activities are well supervised and pupils are considerate towards others when moving around the school.
- Discussions with pupils showed that some were unsure about the difference between bullying and falling out with someone. However, the vast majority of pupils told inspectors that bullying is unusual and that adults would sort things out quickly if it did occur. They understand that bullying can take different forms, including physical bullying, cyber bullying and unkind comments.
- The school teaches pupils how to keep safe when out of school. For example, they are made aware of risks in talking to strangers. Pupils are taught how to use the internet sensibly, including taking care to select online games that are appropriate for their age and how to keep personal information secure.
- Pupils in the resourced provisions are cared for well. Adults are skilled in dealing with their needs. Pupils are helped to become as independent as possible. Pupils placed in these provisions benefit from many opportunities to work and play alongside pupils in mainstream classes.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a harmonious and peaceful environment, where pupils from all heritages and backgrounds get on well together.
- When asked to discuss topics with one another, pupils listen respectfully and quickly come to order when time is up. However, when teaching is not closely matched to their needs, a few pupils switch off or lose attention. Adults are typically quick to spot this and refocus pupils' attention so it does not hinder their learning or that of others.
- Pupils keep the school building neat and tidy. Their workbooks show that they are taking increasing pride in their work, although some earlier pieces are left unfinished and presentation is not always neat. This is in part due to some pupils' remaining difficulties with handwriting. Teachers are now providing clearer, more frequent guidance so pupils fully understand expectations for presentation.
- Leaders have taken action that is effectively improving attendance rates, although overall attendance remains below average. The school works effectively to reduce levels of persistent absence. This includes working in close partnership with parents of children who need to miss school because of their complex medical needs.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because over time pupils have made variable progress in reading and writing at key stage 2. This is the case both overall and for disadvantaged pupils. In both 2015 and 2016, disadvantaged pupils – including the most

able among them – made much weaker progress in reading and writing than others nationally.

- Many pupils in Years 4 to 6 have much ground to make up in order to achieve the standards of which they are capable. As a result of leaders' actions to strengthen teaching, current pupils in key stage 2 are making better progress than they have done in the past. Assessment information and work in pupils' books suggests that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve higher standards than previous cohorts at the end of key stage 2.
- School assessment information suggests that disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are catching up with their peers.
- Pupils' overall achievement in mathematics has generally been stronger than in reading and writing. Attainment and progress in mathematics are at least in line with national averages for key stages 1 and 2. School information for the current year shows a broadly similar pattern of achievement across the school.
- Outcomes are stronger for younger pupils, including for those in the early years provision, where achievement is on an upward trend. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check declined from 2015 to 2016, but for the current year are expected to return to 2015's levels. In 2016, the proportion of key stage 1 pupils reaching or exceeding the standards for their age was at or above national averages in all subjects. Disadvantaged pupils reached standards similar to other pupils nationally. The most able pupils achieved well, with a greater proportion reaching the higher standards than the national average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Those in the resourced provision for hearing impaired pupils make progress in line with others nationally. Visits to lessons and work in books show that over time pupils in the resourced provision for those with autistic spectrum disorder and/or severe learning difficulties make good progress in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years provision is warm and welcoming. Children learn new skills happily in a safe, protected environment. The provision is well led and, as a result, children make good progress in acquiring a wide range of skills.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has consistently risen since 2015. This proportion is currently above average. Disadvantaged children typically achieve at least as well as their peers, and sometimes better.
- Children's progress in early reading and writing is particularly strong. Carefully planned activities, together with a strong grounding in phonics and handwriting skills, enable children to produce high-quality writing.
- Children are cared for well. Adults are kind and attentive to the needs of each child. Children's behaviour in the early years provision is good. They are engaged by the interesting and challenging activities on offer. They concentrate well and stick at tasks. Most children get on well with one another. Adults patiently encourage the few who may

find sharing difficult to respect the wishes of others and to take turns to use the equipment.

- Adults in the resourced provision provide support that sensitively takes account of children's individual needs. These children are encouraged to integrate with others, and are well taught in a safe and protected environment.
- Good home-school links enable parents to feel welcome at the school. The school works closely with external agencies to make sure that children who have any additional needs are identified swiftly and effective extra support is put in place.
- Teaching is effective in promoting good-quality learning. Adults routinely have conversations with the children, listening to them carefully and encouraging them to talk. As a result, children develop good listening and speaking skills. For example, one child, who made a three-dimensional shape using cocktail sticks and tiny marshmallows, was encouraged to use such words as 'triangle' and 'pyramid'.
- The adults in the early years are skilled in providing good opportunities for children to learn language and number skills. For example, a simple activity of shaping black play dough gave children the opportunity to tell adults that they were 'making stars' or 'a kangaroo to jump to the moon'. These, and many other creative activities, enable children to learn with wonder, and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The classrooms and the outdoor play areas are laid out attractively, enabling children to acquire a range of skills. There are plenty of opportunities for them to climb, balance and ride wheeled vehicles. Those who want a more protected environment for part of the day have access to quiet corners and reading areas. Those who want adventure can find it in the activities involving sand, water or construction activities.
- Transition arrangements are well planned at every stage of the children's journey through the early years. Nursery children receive home visits to enable staff to get to know them before they start the year. Children moving to Reception receive induction in the term before their start. Transition into Year 1 is also handled well. Adults' careful attention and support enable children to start Year 1 with good language, number and social skills.

## School details

|                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique reference number | 140667               |
| Local Authority         | Kingston upon Thames |
| Inspection Number       | 10023578             |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                      | Primary  |
| School category                     | Academy sponsor-led  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 3–11   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 230  |
| Appropriate authority               | Academy trust  |
| Chair                               | Diana Brotherston  |
| Executive headteacher               | Deborah Walls  |
| Telephone number                    | 020 8337 3778  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.knollmeadprimary.co.uk">www.knollmeadprimary.co.uk</a> |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:admin@knollmead.rbksch.org">admin@knollmead.rbksch.org</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- Knollmead is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has eight classes in the mainstream school, one in each year group from Nursery to Year 4 and two classes containing a mix of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 12 pupils who have a hearing impairment and also for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder and/or severe learning difficulties.
- Knollmead Primary became a sponsored academy in April 2014, joining the Coombe Secondary Schools Academy Trust that was formed in 2012. It is led by the executive headteacher of the trust, who is a national leader of education.
- The school has not had a full-time headteacher since shortly after it opened. The school has recently appointed a headteacher, the current deputy headteacher, who will take up the post in September 2017.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The school was initially inspected on 22 and 23 February 2017. On 17 May, one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and one Ofsted inspector returned to the school to gather further evidence. The evidence gathered from all three days was used to inform the final judgements.
- Inspectors visited classes throughout the school and observed pupils’ learning in a range of subjects. Senior leaders joined inspectors on many of their classroom visits.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. An inspector met a group of key stage 2 pupils to hear how they felt about the school. There were four responses to the Ofsted online survey of pupils’ views.
- Meetings were held with leaders, including those who hold responsibility for specific subjects.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body and the academy trust.
- Meetings were held with the school’s improvement partner, an external adviser working on behalf of the trust. The adviser passed on the views of two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. There were 19 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 10 comments. Inspectors took all these aspects of parents’ views into consideration.
- Inspectors took into consideration 30 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents. These included minutes of meetings of the governing body and reports from external advisers on the quality of the school’s work. Inspectors looked at documents relating to the school’s evaluation of its performance and discussed these with leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils’ attainment and progress. They also examined safeguarding information, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

## Inspection team

|                               |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sarah Murphy-Dutton           | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Jonathan Roddick              | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Natalia Power, Lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Kanwaljit Singh               | Ofsted Inspector        |

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