

Knowle Primary School

Address: Ringmore Way, West Park, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 3QG

Unique reference number (URN): 145653

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard

Early years

Strong standard 

Staff know the children, and their needs, exceptionally well. This starts right from when children join in the Nursery Year. Staff develop effective partnerships with parents and carers. Leaders ensure that staff consistently maximise the opportunities for engaging children in high-quality interactions. For example, staff proactively seek out children who engage less readily with them, or other children, so they can intervene early to ensure strong progression.

Alongside this, the 'challenge mountain' in Reception class focuses upon children being encouraged to independently access the different areas of the provision. This ensures all areas of the early years foundation stage are taught, and experienced by all children.

The curriculum is exceptionally well designed to address low starting points. There is a sharp focus on making sure that children acquire a wide vocabulary and secure their knowledge of phonics. Leaders have considered how physical movement is a vital part in supporting the development of children's transcriptional knowledge and skills. As a result, children are very well prepared for the next stage of learning and make strong progress from their starting points. Where any child requires additional support in their transition to Year 1, this is planned carefully.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Inclusion is central to all areas of the school's work. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that pupils' needs are identified early. They quickly put appropriate support or adjustments in place. For example, some children in early years learn their curriculum within the nurture space or benefit from additional focus on their speech and language. All staff are well trained. They support all pupils to make strong progress from their starting points.

Leaders review regularly the impact of the support that they provide. For example, they check closely to see how well pupils in the 'Explorers' provision are achieving. This provision has been set up for some pupils in Year 1 who need a more adapted curriculum and a smaller, nurturing space. Pupils here are thriving.

Leaders ensure that additional funding is spent effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and benefit from many wider opportunities.

Where internal strategies are exhausted, leaders use their strong local authority partnerships to secure specialist support. This ensures that no child is left without help. Professionals from other settings visit Knowle to learn from their practice. Leaders work collaboratively with families to shape the support that is in place for pupils.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes. In some areas, such as phonics and the Year 4 multiplication check, this high achievement in national tests has been sustained over several years. In 2025, the school achieved its highest results at key stage 2, with many measures above national average. This represents a significant improvement for the school. Therefore, on the whole, pupils leaving Year 6 are well prepared for their transition to secondary school.

Leaders' sharp focus on securing pupils' core skills supports them to be ready for their next phase. For example, as children move through the school's early years foundation stage, they significantly improve their spoken and written communication.

Many pupils across the school produce high-quality work. On occasion, some pupils show gaps in the accuracy of their handwriting and number formation, which is not always tackled by teachers.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, are relentless in their ambition to secure high attendance for all pupils. They have put in place a range of effective strategies and are making assured progress towards this goal. The number of pupils who are severely absent from school has reduced. There are several examples of pupils now attending more regularly due to the effective support from school and the positive relationships that have been built with families. Leaders know there is more work to do in order to sustain this improved attendance over time.

Leaders establish high expectations for pupils' behaviour. These are built on positive relationships and routines that staff and pupils generally understand and follow. This is shown in the calm, orderly environment in lessons and the sensible behaviour at playtimes. Pupils are motivated to be the best they can be.

The school also provides pupils with highly bespoke support. For example, 'going for gold' plans are used successfully to support some pupils with managing their emotions and behaviour. Strong pastoral support and the teaching of different coping strategies have contributed to a significant reduction in the number and duration of suspensions compared to the previous academic year.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Pupils learn a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have a secure understanding of the quality of this curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum is suitable and well planned for each subject and phase. Leaders identify clear endpoints and sequence the curriculum so that it builds on previous learning.

Leaders provide high-quality professional learning to support teachers, for example in the use of modelling. They also ensure that teachers understand how to adapt their teaching to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Therefore, teachers have the knowledge and expertise to teach confidently and make any required reasonable adjustments. Consequently, the curriculum is generally taught well.

Leaders prioritise the need for pupils to secure their knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly effective in reading, where most pupils learn to read confidently and fluently. Where any pupils find reading more difficult, they are well supported to catch up and keep up. Leaders place importance on developing pupils' language and vocabulary. However, in some areas of important knowledge, such as handwriting and number formation, some pupils make mistakes that are not always identified and addressed by staff. Therefore, these gaps in their learning can persist.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders are determined that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are happy and successful, and that they can access all available opportunities at school. Leaders know the school and its community well. This helps them to understand the school's strengths and priorities for continued improvement. Leaders always base any decisions about change on what it is in the best interests of pupils.

Those responsible for governance meet their statutory duties. They are equally ambitious for pupils and hold leaders to account for delivering a high quality of education in a safe and nurturing environment. They challenge leaders over their progress towards the school's priorities, such as around improving attendance.

Leaders have developed a well-informed professional learning programme. This has built staff's expertise in teaching phonics and strengthened teachers' wider classroom approaches. A coaching model provides staff with dedicated time to apply and embed practice.

Leaders support staff's wellbeing effectively and ensure that their workload is manageable. One way in which this is achieved is by introducing new initiatives in a timely manner with appropriate support. This is highly valued by staff. Staff benefit from work across the trust, such as the opportunity to visit other schools and share best practice. Staff say that they 'work hard for the children and for each other'.

Parents and carers are very positive about the quality of education that the school provides. They appreciate the visibility of leaders and the support the school provides to their child, both academically and pastorally.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school's personal development programme is comprehensive. It provides pupils with opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils learn an ambitious and inclusive personal, social and health education curriculum. This curriculum ensures all statutory requirements, including relationships and sex education, are met. Leaders adapt the curriculum to local contexts. For example, they address city-specific

events, such as the Plymouth riots, through one-off lessons. This ensures pupils can process real-world events in a safe, educational environment.

Leaders are committed to developing pupils' character. Staff model the school values of kindness, ambition and community. Pupils are rewarded for demonstrating these traits across all areas of school life.

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, participate in a wide range of opportunities that broaden their experiences. These include participating in the Plymouth sporting events that cover a wide range of sporting activities, as well as art activities that lead to showcasing their work through a gallery. All pupils also have the chance to engage in whole-class peripatetic music lessons. There are opportunities for leadership, such as being voted on to the school parliament or taking up the role of being a librarian or play leader. Pupils take pride in adopting these important roles. This is one way in which they are helped to develop their understanding of what the fundamental British values are, and their importance in society.

The school provides a diverse and culturally rich wider world offer. Pupils are exposed to experiences such as the 'Reclaiming Narratives' theme and the study of influential people from diverse backgrounds. The school successfully introduces pupils to a range of spiritual and cultural experiences. However, some pupils find the wealth of content that is shared overwhelming. They find it difficult to remember the most important information in their long-term memory.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

At Knowle Primary School, there is a shared belief that 'every child matters and every moment counts'. This is demonstrated through the school's caring and nurturing approach, and the high ambition that leaders and staff hold for all pupils. This inspires pupils' confidence in themselves. Children in the early years get off to a flying start. Parents and carers describe how their children thrive in this setting, quickly developing their language and communication skills. This creates the strong foundations for future success.

Staff get to know pupils well. They understand any barriers to learning they may have, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and take effective steps to reduce these. Typically, teaching across the curriculum is of a high quality. As a result, pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, achieve well in their learning. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes.

The school has selected inspirational figures for class names, such as Kusama and Dahl, which supports the aspirational environment. There is a school uniform shop, which ensures that all pupils can own and wear the school uniform with pride. Pupils feel happy at school. They have a strong sense of belonging and develop positive relationships with staff and their peers. Pupils are well mannered and respectful.

Most pupils now attend school more regularly. However, some are still absent too often. Pupils feel incredibly safe in school. They trust staff to deal with any incidents, including bullying, quickly and effectively. Pupils have a confident understanding of online risks and

how to stay safe within the community. They enjoy the broad range of extra-curricular clubs, such as badminton, book club, football and play dough club. Pupils also benefit from experiences such as visits to museums and sailing trips. These develop their wider knowledge beyond school, and help to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to develop the school's positive work around improving pupils' attendance, so that pupil absence from school continues to reduce.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff identify gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge with more consistency, particularly in handwriting and number formation, model their high expectations and provide frequent opportunities for practice, so that these gaps close quickly.
 - Leaders should support pupils to further deepen the knowledge they learn from the personal development curriculum and to retain this knowledge successfully over time.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Learning Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Simon Spry, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Deborah Taylor.

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the nominee, the chief executive officer for the trust, the director of education for the trust, the vice-chair of the trust board and members of the local governing body during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not use any off-site alternative provision.

The school, under the same registration, runs a nursery for 2-year-old children and above.

Headteacher: Mr Ben Norris

Lead inspector:

Kelly Olive, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Craig Hayes, Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Dadds, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

296

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

57.50%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.72%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

21.62%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	62%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	70%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	68%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	67%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	71%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	47%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	62%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	71%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	61%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	68%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	69%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	47%	66%	-19 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	80%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	62%	78%	-17 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	78%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	71%	78%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	78%	-17 pp
2022/23 (final)	59%	77%	-19 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	61%	79%	-19 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	65%	79%	-14 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.6%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	7.7%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	8.6%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	22.6%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	21.9%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	27.2%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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