

Inspection of Knowsley Village School

Sugar Lane, Knowsley, Prescot, Merseyside L34 0ER

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at school. Most pupils said that staff listen to them and help them to overcome difficulties. This includes any incidents of bullying, which staff deal with quickly and effectively. Pupils are proud of how they help and support one another in their work and in their play. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care from adults.

Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and towards staff. Staff expect pupils to behave well. Overall, most pupils engage well in their learning. However, from time to time, some older pupils are frustrated by occasional low-level disruption. That said, leaders are taking effective action to address this concern for pupils.

Leaders have raised their expectations of how well pupils and children in the early years should achieve. However, pupils do not experience a sufficiently well designed curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve consistently well. Some children in the early years are not fully prepared for the next steps in their education.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular clubs that leaders provide. Pupils develop their self-confidence and sense of responsibility. They eagerly carry out leadership duties, for example as digital leaders. Pupils relish being part of the eco-team. They enjoy raising money for a range of local charities.

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

Leaders are beginning to develop a more ambitious curriculum to meet pupils' learning needs. They have overhauled what is being taught, particularly in subjects such as history and art and design. Leaders provide guidance to teachers about the essential knowledge that pupils must learn and when topics should be taught. However, some teachers do not have the subject knowledge or confidence that they need to deliver the new curriculums consistently well. They have not been fully trained in the new approach.

Leaders' systems to assess pupils' learning are underdeveloped. This is because some staff do not fully understand what pupils must know and remember of the new curriculum.

Leaders do not check that teachers are delivering curriculum content as effectively as they should. As a result, leaders do not have accurate enough oversight of how pupils are learning. Leaders are sometimes unaware that teachers leave out important knowledge when teaching the new topics. This makes pupils' learning insecure. Consequently, pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they should across subjects.

The curriculum in the early years is underdeveloped. It does not cover some of the key areas of learning. It lacks ambition. Teachers are unsure what they should be teaching or how this should be taught. This means that children do not learn all that they need to know. Some children are not as equipped as they should be to embrace the challenges of the Year 1 curriculum.

Leaders are prioritising reading. For example, they have built a new library area to help to promote pupils' love of reading. Over time, leaders have made several appropriate changes to the reading curriculum. For older pupils, the reading curriculum is more established and it is delivered appropriately by teachers. It enables many of those pupils who have a secure knowledge of phonics to become proficient readers.

More recently, leaders have changed the school's phonics programme. This is to ensure that more pupils become accurate and fluent readers as they progress into key stage 2. Leaders have provided adequate training for staff to implement this new phonics programme. However, some staff are still getting to grips with how best to deliver it. Some staff's occasional lack of confidence in this programme is hindering how well some pupils are learning to read. Added to this, some pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise reading. Furthermore, the books that pupils take home to read do not match the sounds that they know.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately and they ensure that these pupils receive suitable support to access their learning. However, the weaknesses in the curriculum for all pupils mean that the achievement of pupils with SEND is uneven.

Leaders have established a positive environment for learning. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children quickly settle into school routines. Across the school, most pupils conduct themselves well. Overall, classrooms are generally calm and orderly places. Pupils attend school regularly and leaders are helping those pupils who are less punctual to arrive on time.

Pupils' wider personal development is a high priority for staff. Leaders make sure that children in the early years have opportunities to develop their social and emotional skills. Staff support pupils in building on this firm foundation as they progress through the school. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from carefully selected opportunities to enhance their wider personal development, including their understanding of different religions and society. Pupils grow in confidence and maturity. They understand how they can make a positive contribution to their school and wider community.

Governors work closely with leaders to meet the needs of pupils at the school. However, governors do not have a secure enough understanding of the quality of education that pupils receive.

Governors and leaders consider staff workload and well-being when making changes to school policies. Staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They are alert to the signs that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff understand the safeguarding procedures that they should follow, including how to record and report any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate support to keep them safe. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They learn about the potential dangers that they may face online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have the subject knowledge that they need to deliver the new curriculum in key stages 1 and 2, including for pupils with SEND. This hinders how well teachers deliver the curriculum and how well pupils learn new knowledge. Leaders must train staff to know and understand how to implement the new curriculum.
- The curriculum in the early years is not as well designed as it could be, including for children with SEND. It lacks some ambition. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for the demands of Year 1 as they should be. Leaders should review the curriculum in the early years to ensure that it meets children's learning needs.
- Leaders' systems to check how well pupils have learned the curriculum are underdeveloped. This means that teachers are not alert to gaps in pupils' understanding. This hinders their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers understand how to check pupils' learning across the full curriculum.
- The early reading curriculum, including some aspects of the phonics programme, is not delivered consistently well by staff. This includes in the early years. The books that pupils read do not always match the sounds that they know. This hinders how well some pupils learn to read. It also hinders their comprehension of texts. Leaders must ensure that teachers deliver the phonics programme well and that the books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they are learning.
- In some subjects, leaders and governors do not have a secure enough understanding of how well the curriculum is delivered by staff. This means that they have an incomplete overview of the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and development. Leaders must establish more comprehensive systems to ascertain how well the curriculum is being implemented by staff and the impact that it is having on pupils' learning and progress.

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.

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	104423
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10256069
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alison Hambley
Headteacher	Julia Barlow
Website	www.knowsleyvillageschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governors. The lead inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text comments.

- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and the responses to Ofsted’s pupil survey.
- Inspectors viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. They spoke with staff to check how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities. Inspectors checked leaders’ procedures for safer recruitment.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. Inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at examples of their work. Inspectors also discussed other subjects across the curriculum. Inspectors listened to pupils read to trusted adults.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at playtimes and in lessons. They spoke with pupils to gather their views about behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to explore their views about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Moira Atkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Hanley

Ofsted Inspector

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