

Warden Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109562
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	356576
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ethel Shaw
Headteacher	Mark Welch
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed learning in 21 lessons, taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with teachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school improvement plans, data tracking pupil progress, work in pupils' books and school policies. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 102 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively has the school tackled underachievement in mathematics?
- How well are middle leaders driving improvements in provision, particularly in the quality of teaching?
- Are improvements in attainment in English likely to be maintained?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average junior school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. Twenty seven nationalities are represented in the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average. A privately run nursery is situated on site and this will be subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. The school has a number of awards and accreditations including Investors in People, the intermediate level International School Award and Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Happy and secure pupils thrive in this good and improving school. No pupil's needs are overlooked. Staff work tirelessly to ensure all pupils are known individually and are exceptionally well cared for. Pupils are very proud of their school and take part in a full range of activities with enthusiasm. Their ideas, positive attitudes and enthusiastic involvement in school life illustrate their outstanding contribution to this successful school community. Support for potentially vulnerable pupils is impressive, with the school working well with a range of agencies and partners to support families and individuals. Pupils and their parents and carers are very positive about the range of opportunities provided through the curriculum, many of which contribute to outstanding outcomes in relation to keeping healthy and pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Senior leaders are relentless in their drive to improve the school. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum have seen attainment rise to above the national average. Improvements have been most significant in the teaching of English. The school has begun to work on improving provision in mathematics and, while there is still some way to go in some classes, these improvements are having a positive impact on the progress pupils are making. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above-average standards of attainment in mathematics and English.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In many lessons, the pace is rapid. Pupils join in excitedly as they are challenged with searching questions and well-designed tasks. In these lessons, pupils really enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. However, a minority of lessons lack pace and, as a result, pupils do not engage as well and some pupils chatter too readily. The teaching of mathematics is improving but a significant minority of lessons lack sufficient challenge to fully stretch the most-able pupils. In these lessons, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics practically and develop problem-solving skills. In the minority of lessons that were satisfactory rather than good, teachers did not adapt their questions enough to fully challenge all learners. The quality of marking and feedback is good in many books. However, in some classes, the feedback given is not used by pupils to improve their work. Different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve equally well because they receive high-quality additional support and adapted tasks. Pupils from different backgrounds achieve equally well. Where underachievement remains, for example for some higher ability pupils in mathematics, there is compelling evidence that these gaps are closing.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the next steps for improvement. The headteacher is held in very high esteem. He has galvanised and maintained the support and enthusiasm of the whole school. Governors are very supportive of the schools work and have a good understanding of strengths and

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weaknesses. However, their view is very much informed by senior leaders because their systems for monitoring the effectiveness of their policies are underdeveloped. Middle leadership is developing. It is strongest in the leadership of subjects. However, year group leaders are over-reliant on guidance from senior leaders and, as a consequence, their capacity to develop teaching and learning in their year groups is limited. Senior leaders provide excellent support for the development of teaching. They are quick to recognise strengths and use expertise within school to support professional development. As a result, the capacity to make further improvements is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring all lessons are well paced and provide regular opportunities for pupils to contribute
 - ensuring pupils are consistently challenged by well placed questions.
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics so they are all confident in developing pupils' investigative skills
 - enabling year group leaders to take a more proactive role in developing the teaching in their year group.
- Improve the usefulness of marking by giving pupils the opportunity to improve their work as a result of high quality feedback.
- Improve the systems and procedures for the governing body to monitor the effectiveness of the school's policies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment is improving and is now above average. Work in pupils' books shows that progress is accelerating as a result of improved teaching and an inspiring curriculum. In good lessons seen, pupils are exceptionally keen to answer questions and work hard on the tasks given to them. A purposeful buzz is typical, with pupils supporting each other and working diligently.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They talk confidently about how they learn to stay safe in different situations. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of staying safe when using technology such as the internet. They say that adults are always willing to listen to them and that they are taken seriously. Much of the behaviour around school is exemplary. Pupils deal with difficult situations and conflict with maturity and common sense. In a few lessons, behaviour deteriorated when the teacher talked for too long or did not provide enough challenge for all groups. However, this deterioration was limited to a small number of pupils drifting off task or chatting.

Pupils demonstrate a deep understanding of how to keep healthy. Specialist sports staff have enhanced the curriculum and developed teachers' expertise. As a result, a broad diet of sport and physical activity is leading to exceptionally positive attitudes to dance, sport and maintaining fitness.

Pupils are immensely proud of their school and how it fits into the community of Luton. They speak passionately about their commitment to promoting harmony between pupils

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from different backgrounds and cultures. Their moral judgement often demonstrates a maturity beyond their years. Pupils' awareness of and eagerness to celebrate different faiths and cultures is impressive. Their contribution to the school community is outstanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is good. It is particularly strong in English and in the foundation subjects. The school has rightly targeted teaching in mathematics as an area for improvement and this is having a positive impact on improving outcomes so they are nearer to those in English. Teaching is good because teachers plan carefully to match lessons to the needs of pupils. Where this happens, all pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who are learning English as an additional language are taught well and supported effectively by well-trained and effective support staff.

The curriculum is broad and exciting. The many activities on offer to enrich the curriculum are greatly appreciated by pupils. Music and sport have a high profile in school. Specialist teachers and coaches provide quality opportunities for pupils to engage in activities beyond what are typical. Whole-school singing is of a very high quality because a specialist singing teacher has been engaged by the school to lead in this area. As a result, pupils develop good technique and awareness. They enjoy singing and this is evident in

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the quality of their performance. Cross-curricular links are developing, particularly for writing. Displays around the school demonstrate how the curriculum is being used to provide high quality opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in interesting and purposeful ways.

The care guidance and support provided by the school is outstanding. Adults are exceptionally conscientious in ensuring all pupils are well cared for and develop a clear moral and social code. Support for potentially vulnerable pupils is very strong and child protection practice is exemplary. The family support worker is exceptionally effective at coordinating support within school and brokering services from a range of external agencies. Actions to promote attendance are extensive and have a high profile in school. As a result, attendance is improving.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Teachers are well supported in developing their own practice. Management systems run smoothly. The work of middle leaders is developing. Subject leaders share the determination demonstrated by senior leaders. They base their actions to drive school improvement on their clear understanding of the effectiveness of provision. Year group leaders support senior leaders by acting as a conduit for information. However, their role in developing teaching and learning in their year group is under-developed.

The governing body is well informed and meets its statutory duties. However, its monitoring relies too heavily on information provided by the senior leadership team. Its systems for monitoring and challenging this information are not fully developed. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, carefully evaluated and effective.

There are extensive partnerships which the school uses very effectively to positively influence the development of pupils academically, personally and socially. Families are very well supported because the school works well with other agencies to provide carefully matched advice, guidance and support. The curriculum is greatly enhanced through the high-quality work of partners in developing aspects such as sport and music.

Leaders have a good understanding of the rich cultural diversity that exists within the school and in the local community. Their actions to promote community cohesion within the school and the wider community have been exceptionally effective. Pupils have a very clear understanding of their own community and the diversity that exists within the United Kingdom. Well established links with other schools locally, nationally and internationally

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promotes pupils understanding of wider cultural perspectives. The school tracks the progress of pupils from different groups and effectively tackles underachievement for any particular group. Gaps between groups are closing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire or who spoke with inspectors are happy with their children's experience at this school. The parents' and carers' questionnaire shows a very positive view of the school. A few parents expressed some concerns about the effectiveness of managing unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found no examples of unacceptable behaviour but did find that, in a small number of lessons, behaviour was satisfactory and this was not sufficiently challenged to ensure it returned to the exemplary standard that is typical around school. A few parents were concerned that their children were not making enough progress and that work in mathematics lessons was too easy. Inspectors found this to be the case in a small number of lessons, particularly for the most-able children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Warden Hill Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 355 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	56	41	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	62	38	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	42	55	54	2	2	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	46	48	47	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	45	50	49	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	34	57	56	9	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	35	58	57	6	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	42	53	52	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	38	54	53	8	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	35	58	57	6	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	29	62	61	5	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	68	67	31	30	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	59	37	36	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Warden Hill Junior School, Luton, LU3 2DN

You may remember that I came to inspect your school recently with several other inspectors. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

We found that you go to a good school. The teaching is good and you enjoy the many things that your school organises for you. We particularly enjoyed watching you perform well in music and PE. We were very impressed with how well you all got on together. You all contribute very well to making your school a fantastic community. In many parts of the school, your behaviour was fantastic. It is a shame that, in a few lessons, some of you chatted and messed about a little too much when you should have been listening or working on your tasks. It is important that you always try to behave well, even when you are not very interested in what you are doing! In most classes, you behave wonderfully well and we enjoyed watching how excited you got about your learning.

We have asked your school to make a few improvements so it is even better in the future. We have asked your teachers to make sure all lessons are good and enjoyable. We would like to see more challenging activities in some of your numeracy lessons so you have the opportunity to use numbers to solve real-life problems. A small number of you told us that marking does not always help you to improve your work. We found that your teachers spend a lot of time marking and giving you feedback but you do not always get the chance to use this to make your work better. We have asked your teachers to make sure the feedback they give you is always useful and that you get a chance to make your work better once you have received their feedback.

I would like to finish by thanking you for helping us make our judgements about your school. Your maturity, behaviour and manners are a very important part of making your school such a pleasant place to be. You should be proud of your contribution.

You have my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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