

Wilbury Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117121
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379353
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim McCarroll
Headteacher	John Cattermole
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons taught by 13 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning, assessment data, policies and governors' reports. They scrutinised 91 parental questionnaires.

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

- Inspectors investigated what the school is doing to raise standards, especially in mathematics.
- They looked at the school's provision for its most able pupils to see how teachers are helping them reach the higher levels.
- They looked at how target setting and marking supports pupils' progress and learning.
- Inspectors investigated how well the senior leadership team monitors the work of the school and what impact this has on provision and outcomes.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of the pupils are White British. There are pupils from a range of other ethnic backgrounds but the overall proportion is below average. A small but growing proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.

The school has an Activemark award, a Football Association Charter Award, an intermediate International Schools Award and Investors in People status. There is a privately run breakfast club that is inspected and reported on separately.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has been through some significant changes recently, including to its senior leadership team and a merger with a closing school. These changes have been effectively managed and, although attainment has dipped, the current progress being made by pupils has improved, especially in Year 6. Teaching and the curriculum are more effective in supporting the progress of all pupils and the leadership has a clear and ambitious vision for the school's future. Many of the improvements are at an early stage and yet to have a full impact on outcomes. Because of this, although aspects of the leadership and provision are good, the capacity to continue improving and raising standards still higher remains satisfactory.

Given pupils often average or below starting points, the progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics is satisfactory and improving. Even so, standards over time have not reached the levels the school would wish and steps have been taken to address this. Since the last inspection the planning has improved and the school is doing far more to raise standards, especially for the most able pupils. Standards in mathematics still fall behind those in reading and writing but the school has made improvements to the provision for mathematics and some impact can already be seen. Pupils understand the targets set for them and how they can achieve them. Teachers' marking helps them understand better how they can improve their work, especially in writing. The school helps pupils stay safe and healthy effectively. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. There are many opportunities for them to take responsibility and they respond to this well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and this helps their learning. In a number of lessons, especially in Years 5 and 6, behaviour is outstanding. Too many families take holiday time off during school terms and this means pupils miss important aspects of their learning.

The teaching is satisfactory overall. In a number of lessons some very effective teaching was observed but this remains inconsistent across groups and in different subjects. The curriculum provided for pupils is good with some effective links made between subjects and some very imaginative enrichment activities that provide pupils with very enjoyable learning experiences, such as the recent Year 5 work on dragons which pupils talked about very enthusiastically. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils by the school are a major strength. Pastoral work with pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and with those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is often of exceptional quality. Work supporting

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the gifted and talented pupils is developing well and the opportunities provided for them are currently satisfactory and improving.

The leadership of the headteacher and his senior staff is taking the school in the right direction to achieve the school's aims and vision. The recent focus on raising standards in the basic skills is proving successful and the school is beginning to develop a more creative curriculum and to extend its work in teaching pupils about how other people live beyond the local community. The governing body provides satisfactory and improving support. Its members have developed a good system for visiting the school and monitoring and reporting on its work. Improvement work is based on a detailed and practical development planning document. The school works well to ensure pupils are safe and secure. Parents and carers agree that their children are safe and happy at school. As one said, 'We moved our daughter from another school – she has come out of her shell, is in many clubs and is very, very happy.'

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - consolidating recent improvements in teaching methods
 - ensuring more pupils reach the higher levels
 - providing more opportunities for problem solving and practical activities.
- Further develop teachers' skills and spread the existing good and outstanding practice across all subjects and year groups.
- Build on the good work to encourage all pupils' full attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are improving. The progress in mathematics is not yet as consistent as that in reading and writing but the school is working hard to improve this. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally sound progress given their starting points. The school ensures they have full access to the curriculum. There are no significant differences in the progress and achievement of the small number of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Over the past year improvements to the work with the most able pupils is having a positive impact and more are now making improving progress in English and mathematics. In one good mathematics lesson the mental work used as a warm-up at the start was very effectively open-ended and allowed the higher-attaining pupils good opportunities to develop their thinking skills.

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Basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are now satisfactory and improving. The pupils are being soundly prepared for their future education although habits of regular attendance are less evident in some families. Good opportunities to develop spiritual and cultural matters are taken through the curriculum and in assemblies, including class-based worship. For example, during the inspection, pupils’ learning about Diwali was supported by the good opportunity for children from different cultures to dress in traditional clothes and talk to the school about their customs.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. This has been achieved by making teachers more aware of how well their pupils are learning through familiarity with data and better, more accurate assessments. Professional development has been used to introduce better teaching of sounds and letters in the lower age groups, and of methods and skills in mathematics throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are often very strong and this helps pupils enjoy their learning and genuinely want to succeed. Teaching assistants are well deployed and have a positive impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Imaginative use of the curriculum is growing and this helps pupils make links between subjects and use their basic skills for different purposes. During the inspection, for example, Year 4 pupils were clearly excited and enthused by a project on Ancient Egyptians which involved an outside

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

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expert providing good input and the opportunities to handle and learn about a range of artefacts.

The school has a major focus on inclusion and has resourced this area well through staffing, books and equipment and accommodation. This is used for lunchtime clubs and withdrawal groups, when appropriate. The progress made by the pupils being supported in this way is now more carefully tracked. The school works very hard with some pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to help them make the best progress they can and to prepare them for their future education. The inclusion manager and the other staff involved provide outstanding care and guidance for these pupils, often in some very difficult circumstances. The school strives to ensure all pupils have good attendance and has good plans in place to improve this further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of the recent changes to the senior leadership team has been positive and there is now a clear and firm ambition to raise standards and to help more pupils reach the higher levels. The use of effective assessment data has been a major improvement. Senior staff now ensure all teachers are aware of the progress of pupils in their classes so that any underachievement can be swiftly addressed. Regular meetings between senior leaders and teachers are held to increase accountability and to explore any strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. The governing body’s effectiveness is satisfactory. It has some good links through an effective system of visits to enable its members to monitor the school’s work and hold staff to account. This work is giving the governing body a higher profile and making the school community more aware of its activity. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily.

The school engages well with parents and carers through curriculum information and evenings, communication by text messages and by inviting them to a range of school events. Parents and carers praised the transition arrangements for when their children move from the infant school. Partnerships with a range of outside agencies and other partners, such as the local authority, has had a positive impact on the curriculum, on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and on the improving arrangements for providing opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. The school has links with local schools and one in France, but is yet to fully explore and evaluate its work in teaching about how other people live. Good safeguarding arrangements

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are in place. All visitors are provided with a detailed leaflet regarding child protection, including photographs and names of the staff responsible.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires are positive about the work of the school. They particularly praise how well the school keeps their children safe and how well they are helped to support their children’s learning at home. The inspection evidence supports these positive views. The school works well to keep pupils safe and secure. They encourage parental support with homework and through events such as e-safety meetings. Parents and carers are less sure that the school deals effectively with behaviour issues. However, the systems observed during the inspection were robust and effective in securing all pupils’ ability to work and play safely and without distraction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wilbury 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 282 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	49	43	47	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	60	35	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	39	43	49	54	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	41	49	54	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	46	46	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	38	42	51	56	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	43	49	54	2	2	0	0
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)	40	44	47	52	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	39	43	50	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	43	41	45	7	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	47	52	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	48	42	46	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	48	53	41	45	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wilbury Junior School, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4DU

I am writing to thank you for the way you welcomed the inspectors to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and talking with many of you about your school. We especially enjoyed seeing how well most of you behaved in lessons and how much you clearly enjoyed your learning. Well done!

Wilbury is a satisfactory school but it is getting better all the time. This is because of the leadership of the headteacher and his senior staff. A lot of you told us about the difference they have made and we agree with you. Because the school is improving you are learning more and reaching higher standards especially in reading and writing. We have asked the school to help you get even better at mathematics as well.

The teachers are working hard to help you learn. You have some very exciting and imaginative lessons that help you learn a lot (such as when you seek out dragons!). We have asked the school to help the best teachers share their skills and spread good ideas across the school. This is to help even more of you make good or better progress in your learning.

Some of you miss school sessions, which means that you lose out on some important learning. We have asked the school to try and persuade more of your parents to help you to attend more regularly.

Thank you again for your friendliness and help. Enjoy your time at Wilbury, come every day and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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