

Wootey Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115985
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	379182
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Chris Grove

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Camilla Clayton
Headteacher	Ella Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Chris Grove

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons taught by six teachers, and heard some pupils in Years 1 and 2 read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff and the Chair, Vice Chair and another member of the Governing Body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. The questionnaires returned by 66 parents and carers, as well as those completed by staff, were analysed.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British, and the remainder come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, principally speech, language and communication needs or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, is also above average. Among the school's accreditations is the Hampshire Trailblazer (Silver) award. There is a breakfast club and an after-school club which are not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection. These reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Without exception, parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaire would recommend it to others. It is not yet an outstanding school because teaching results in good rather than outstanding progress, particularly in writing.
- In all year groups, pupils make good progress in their learning, but progress is best in reading and mathematics. Consequently, attainment is on an upward trend and on track to be above average in the current year.
- Good progress is the result of the good quality of teaching. However, in setting and assessing writing tasks teachers do not make consistent use of success criteria, or focus as strongly as they should on the structure and content of pupils' work. In the Reception classes, there is good teaching of writing, but there are not as many opportunities for children to practise as there could be.
- Pupils behave well. They show positive attitudes to learning, paying good attention and responding well to teachers. Pupils are diligent in completing tasks and cooperate well with others. They feel safe in school because there is little bullying and pupils are confident in adults' support for them.
- The leadership team and governors are ambitious for the school. The headteacher provides a strong lead, and is well supported by other leaders. Staff morale is high. Parents greatly appreciate the approachability of staff, their care for children, and the good quality of teaching. Effective arrangements to monitor teaching and learning and to track pupils' progress underpin the school's improvement planning, and lead to pupils' good progress and rising attainment. Good professional development has supported improved performance. The curriculum is imaginative. It meets pupils' interests and needs and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing further, particularly for the more-able pupils, in order to match their higher attainment in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that pupils have a precise understanding of the expectations of writing tasks through the consistent use of clear success criteria

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- focusing more on the content and the structure of pupils' writing when teachers give advice and mark work
- providing more opportunities for the practice of writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence supports the unanimous view of parents and carers who completed a questionnaire that their children make good progress. When children first enter the school, their skills and experiences are variable, but are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in writing. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning so that most meet, and some exceed, expectations by the end of their Reception year. Even though children's progress in writing is good, their attainment in this subject remains lower than in other areas. This is because there are not always sufficient opportunities to practise and consolidate their skills. Children enjoy the different experiences on offer, including the mid-morning fruit and drink time, and the massage session after lunch. They make good progress in reading words using their phonic knowledge (linking letters and sounds), and also in recognising such tricky words as 'what' and 'my'.

All groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals and those from different ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In recent times, attainment, including reading, has typically been broadly average, but school data indicate that attainment in all subjects will be higher in 2012. However, pupils' attainment is better in reading and mathematics than in writing because a much greater proportion of more-able pupils attain the higher levels. This was evident in a very well-taught lesson in mathematics, where pupils in a Year 2 class made rapid progress in solving multiplication problems. This was because they had been strongly encouraged to apply their existing mathematical knowledge, and their understanding of strategies such as constructing an array, to demonstrate, for instance, that 8×5 makes 40. In a phonics lesson in Year 1, pupils made good progress in recognising different ways in which the same sound can be spelled. They correctly identified that words in a text such as 'bear', 'square', 'air' and 'there' involve the same sound. More hesitant readers also make good progress. For instance, one pupil in Year 2 used phonic understanding well in reading fluently and confidently a new story which included unfamiliar words such as 'thought' and 'boomerang'. In discussion, these pupils were able to explain the story well, which indicates good comprehension. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because tasks are appropriately adapted for them, and they are well supported.

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Quality of teaching

The relationships between pupils and staff are particularly good. One parent characterised this aptly when writing that staff 'are very in tune with each and every child's needs'. This supports pupils' personal development well. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness, and for pupils' progress, which lead to their evident readiness to learn. In addition, the strong team of learning support assistants consistently offer appropriate help, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so that they make good progress. The school's improving attainment data, as well as evidence from hearing pupils read and discussion with them, show reading is taught well.

Lessons proceed at a good pace which sustains pupils' motivation well. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and professional expertise enable them to engage pupils in learning of good quality. In a lesson about learning to write a riddle, for instance, one teacher adroitly drew out in discussion with the class the strengths and weaknesses of a particular example. She then emphasised the criteria for successful work so that pupils were clear what was expected before they started their task. However, teachers do not consistently adopt this good practice in advance of setting writing tasks, or indeed other work. In an intensive session for a group in Reception, one teacher provided a very good opportunity to practise early writing skills. She first elicited ideas from the children and then, through skilful question and answer work, helped them to clarify what they intended to write. Once the children were clear about what they wanted to record, they focused fully on accurate letter formation, spelling and punctuation in their writing. Such a good example serves as a model to increase the opportunities to practise skills and raise attainment in writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Scrutiny of pupils' writing work in Years 1 and 2 indicates that pupils continue to receive encouraging feedback from teachers' marking and good guidance from the school's target setting arrangements. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that teachers do not consistently provide as much advice and feedback as they could on the structure and content of pupils' writing as part of a strategy to raise attainment.

All respondents to the questionnaire for parents and carers considered that teaching is good. Inspection evidence shows that, although teaching is good overall, there are ways in which its impact could be improved to raise pupils' performance, in writing in particular.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are typically very attentive in the classroom and cooperate well with others. They are responsive to teachers' questions and apply themselves well to their tasks. Their behaviour reflects the school's positive ethos, emphasis on the core values of 'happiness', 'respect' and 'creativity' and high staff expectations. Occasionally, however, teachers have to manage the attentiveness of a few children in the Reception year. In the playground,

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pupils play sensibly together because they enjoy good relationships with others. Levels of adult supervision are good. All the parents and carers who completed a questionnaire agreed that their children feel safe, and almost all judged that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school. Pupils agree that they feel safe, and are confident to involve an adult where necessary. Parents and carers find school staff approachable and responsive. As one wrote, 'Whenever I have something upsetting my child I know that staff will act on it.' Pupils say that they learn about risks, for example how to keep themselves safe when crossing roads or when using the internet.

The school's records indicate that pupils' behaviour over time is also good. Evidence shows that the school has little recourse to exclusion. Instances of bullying or of racism are rare. Nearly every parent or carer, and all respondents to the staff questionnaire, agreed that the school deals effectively with instances of bullying. The only parent who referred to a bullying issue experienced by their child commented that it was 'resolved immediately before it became a problem.' Pupils' attendance has been average in recent years, and has improved, reflecting effective action by the school's leadership.

Leadership and management

Leaders communicate an ambitious vision for the school, which is shared by members of staff. This leads to their sense of commitment. One wrote of her pride in being 'part of such a dynamic team who truly make a difference to children's and families' lives.' The leadership team, and particularly the headteacher, sustain the positive ethos well. One parent wrote with good insight about the 'strong, empowering leadership from the headteacher and her two deputies.' Leaders have been notably successful in engaging parents and carers, for instance through the daily early morning opportunities to share their children's learning and to speak with teachers.

Self-evaluation is thorough. Pupils' performance is reviewed at termly progress meetings. These promote equality of opportunity through additional support for individuals where necessary. The inclusive ethos does not accept discrimination of any kind. Subject leaders monitor pupils' books and teachers' planning, and report regularly to colleagues and governors. Members of staff speak positively about the impact of professional development within and beyond school and about constructive feedback from observations. Strategic improvement planning is based on analysis of data and feedback from monitoring activities. Members of the governing body demonstrate a good understanding of the school's many strengths and few weaknesses. They provide effective challenge by holding the headteacher and other leaders to account.

The broad and balanced curriculum broadens pupils' horizons. Good attention is paid to the development of basic skills. The school also places a strong emphasis on pupils' understanding of values. The core values underpin the school's Golden Rules and Silver Learning Code, for instance 'doing your best' and 'finding out for yourself.'

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These support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. In an assembly, for instance, one class encouraged others to reflect by exploring such Olympic values as determination and courage. The Trailblazer award reflects the focus on outdoor education. Special events, such as book week, promote wider perspectives, for example stories from Africa. A weekly paired reading session takes place with pupils from the adjoining junior school. The Friday Golden Time clubs include cooking, circus skills and dance. In addition, the well-attended extra-curricular activities cater for musical and sporting interests and include art and gardening clubs. There is a good partnership with the organisation running the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The school's capacity to improve is demonstrated by pupils' good progress and rising attainment. Their positive attitudes and behaviour, and the parents' strong endorsement of the school, point to leadership's good impact. Leaders are assiduous in ensuring that safeguarding expectations are met and that potentially vulnerable pupils are consistently well supported. Action has successfully been taken to improve behaviour management strategies and to implement more incisive monitoring and evaluation and development planning.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wootey Infant School, Alton GU34 2JA

I would like to thank you all for your help during the inspection. I enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms, talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes, and hearing some of you read. I especially thank those of you who came for a discussion with me. The inspection has found that you go to a good school.

These are the main things that I found out about your school.

- Your attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 is above average, and you achieve well.
- You have very good relationships with teachers and other adults and you feel safe in school.
- Your behaviour at school is good. You listen attentively in lessons, and work and play well with other pupils.
- The teaching and curriculum help you to make good progress in all the classes.
- Your headteacher and the other leaders know what to do to continue to improve your school.

I have asked the headteacher and the governing body to make the school even better by improving your writing in three ways.

- Make sure that teachers always explain WILF (What I am Looking For) before you start writing tasks so that you know what is expected.
- Ask teachers to think more about how well you are writing and what you could improve when they advise you about your work and when they mark it.
- Give the children more opportunities to practise their writing skills in the Reception classes.

You can help by going on working hard, especially to improve your writing, so that the school can continue to get even better.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove
Lead inspector

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