

# How Wood Primary and Nursery School

Spooners Drive, Park Street, St Albans, AL2 2HU

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development which enables them to reach above-average standards of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The school gives all its pupils quality experiences which successfully promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school because teachers have high expectations and deliver lessons that are interesting and help pupils to improve.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to raising achievement and effectively manage teachers' performance, which has led to rapid improvements across the school.
- Pupils are motivated by their work, are well behaved in lessons and around the school, concentrate well and thrive when working collaboratively.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs through effective support and interventions.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- The outdoor learning environment for Early Years Foundation Stage is not sufficiently creative and inviting to provide children with excitement in learning.
- Teachers do not always make full use of their assessment of what pupils can do in order to pitch work at the right level.
- Pupils are sometimes unclear about what they should be doing or what progress they are making.
- Attendance is below average because some parents take holidays in term time.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. Additionally, short observations were made of learning support assistants teaching or working with small groups.
- Inspectors made visits to classes to look at displays and observe pupils at work and play, listened to them read and spoke to them about their experiences at school and their learning.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the senior and middle leaders, class teachers, groups of pupils and the local authority improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, and documentation relating to management, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- Informal meetings were held with parents during the inspection. Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and considered 28 staff responses.

## Inspection team

Raminder Arora, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janev Mehmet-Christofides

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school. About three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a range of ethnic backgrounds including a few from the Travelling community.
- About 16% of pupils speak a language other than English, of which very few are at an early stage of learning the language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average, and a small number are supported at school action. Pupils' needs are predominantly related to moderate learning difficulties and behavioural needs.
- There is a part-time morning Nursery class and a Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school hosts privately run breakfast and after-school clubs. These were not included in this inspection.
- An average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has Healthy School status, the Eco Silver and Gold Travel awards.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning across the school from good to outstanding by:
  - accurately using information about what pupils can do and ensuring that pupils understand the criteria for success when they are set individual or group tasks
  - ensuring that activities are invariably challenging for all groups of pupils
  - increasing pupils' confidence in applying their numeracy skills when solving mathematical problems
  - extending further the effective use of information and communication technology and the virtual learning environment
  - improving the quality of outdoor learning in Early Years Foundation Stage and enabling children to access more exciting and consistently challenging experiences.
- Improve attendance by working closely with parents and raising their awareness of the importance of pupils attending school regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well through the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start, particularly in their social development. Pupils' prior attainment is broadly in line with that found nationally on entry and pupils make good progress to reach above-average levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6.
- The pupils eligible for pupil premium attain above average standards and achieve well. This is because the funding to improve their performance is carefully spent and extra support where needed is organised effectively to ensure they make consistently good progress.
- The schools' results dipped in 2011 due to some previously weak teaching and staff changes. School leaders made a determined effort to ensure that pupils make faster progress and current data, endorsed by inspection findings, demonstrate that pupils are again attaining above-average standards in English and mathematics.
- The school adopts a successful inclusive approach. Learning resources are customised to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have access to all aspects of the curriculum and achieve well. Those learning English as an additional language also make good progress due to the good support from all staff.
- The school places great emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and this is enabling pupils to develop good reading, writing and presentation skills. Progress of a small number of lower-attaining pupils in mathematics is currently not as good as expected, and this is because of a lack of challenge in some lessons and insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their basic calculation skills in unfamiliar contexts and across other subjects.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The view of parents and carers is that teaching is good. This is consistent with the evidence from the inspection. Typically, teaching moves at a brisk pace and pupils are engaged in their learning. Activities match the pupils' abilities in most subjects and the well-focused and targeted support of additional adults ensures that all pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was evident in most lessons. Pupils value the opinions of others, behave well and enjoy working cooperatively. In the Key Stage 1 classes, pupils are encouraged to develop a good sense of right and wrong by creating and then adhering to school routines.
- Overall progress in language and communication is improving steadily due to the systematic teaching of sounds and letters (phonics). Pupils' progress in reading across the school is consistently good in reading and writing because phonics is taught systematically. While most teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, opportunities are sometimes missed to provide exciting learning activities in the outdoor area.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is particularly effective. Their learning is supported well by the well-trained teaching assistants. They ensure that these pupils are clear about their targets. Furthermore, they give good and structured support to enable them to learn as well as their classmates.
- The teachers' expert questioning skills ensure that all pupils are absorbed by the tasks they are set. This was noted in a lesson where pupils engaged collaboratively in making a model

of a human heart. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use skilful strategies to reinforce learning, for example, a lesson in Year 2 about application of number bonds. The planned use of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' learning in different subjects is not a common feature of most lessons.

- Teachers mostly modify their planning to meet the needs of pupils. Occasionally, however, pupils do not fully understand the task and so do not perform to the best of their ability. The mismatch of task and inconsistency of challenge results in some lower-attaining pupils not making enough progress. This is especially the case where pupils are unclear about the success criteria for the lesson and so are uncertain as to what they should be learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils is good**

- Pupils' mature attitudes to learning are commendable and contribute greatly to their achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour observed during the inspection was good. This was a fact supported by parents and carers, who assured inspectors that this was typical.
- Relationships across the school are strong and pupils have benefited from their visit to the Houses of Parliament and their link with a school in India, which has promoted good community and cultural understanding. This is an inclusive school, which ensures that all pupils are given the opportunity to benefit from all that is on offer.
- The very few incidents of bullying, including any racist or homophobic name-calling are tracked and analysed to establish any patterns of inappropriate behaviour. The school takes all incidents seriously and deals with them effectively by also involving parents. As a consequence, pupils show respect and care towards each other and learn to accept differences.
- Attendance is below average. The school is diligent in following up instances of persistent absence and there are well-considered procedures shared with parents. However, the attendance levels are affected by some parents who decide to ignore the school's advice and take children on holidays during term time.
- Pupils enjoy school and say they are safe because adults care for them. Staff deal with all minor accidents quickly, reassuring and reminding pupils of the ways in which they can keep safe.

### **The leadership and management is good**

- The senior leadership team, middle leaders and governing body are united in their drive to improve standards in all areas of the school's work. Lessons are monitored regularly and feedback is provided against agreed criteria. Expectations are high and, increasingly, staff live up to them.
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures are thorough and accurate. This, when linked to the rigorous performance management processes and focused continuing professional development, ensures that there is continuous improvement in teaching and in pupils' progress.
- Through the school improvement partner, the local authority is very supportive of the school's work. The staff are very appreciative of the guidance they are receiving and the opportunities available for further professional development, both school-based and external.

- Self-evaluation systems are well established and rigorous, as shown by the recent reviews of teaching and learning which led to improvements in the support for different groups of pupils. Levels of attainment have risen sharply in the last year and the school is moving forward strongly on further raising pupils' achievement, indicating a good capacity for sustained improvement.
- The school's positive ethos, purposeful climate for learning and unceasing commitment provide all pupils with equal opportunities to succeed and help all groups to feel valued.
- Safeguarding and pupils' health and welfare, are given a high priority. Detailed risk assessments, emergency planning and very clear fire procedures are in place.
- The curriculum is good, with purposeful links across different subjects to make it interesting for all pupils. Pupils benefit greatly from their participation in curriculum enrichment days, book weeks, special topic weeks and educational visits.
- Parents are very supportive of the school through their active parent-teacher association.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is knowledgeable and supports the school well
  - ensures that all regulatory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils and staff vetting procedures are fully in place
  - has a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because of the governing body's active involvement in monitoring the school's provision and pupils' progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117235
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401656

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Iain Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Parv Qureshi
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727768885
<b>Fax number</b>	01727768884
<b>Email address</b>	head@howwood.herts.sch.uk



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