

Woodlands Junior School

Loxford Lane, Ilford, IG1 2PY

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
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' achievement in English and mathematics has improved rapidly. Across the school, attainment is now close to the national average. In 2012, Year 6 pupils achieved their best test results in five years.
- The large majority of pupils learn well and make good progress by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in writing is often rapid.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. The good curriculum engages pupils' interests and motivates them to learn with enthusiasm and high levels of enjoyment.
- Pupils feel safe. The school keeps pupils safe. Behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils work well with each other and with their teachers.
- Attendance in all year groups has improved and is close to the national average.
- Leaders and members of the interim executive board check the school's work thoroughly. Their actions have had a clear impact on raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in reading and mathematics is not as rapid for some pupils as it is for writing. Lower ability pupils sometimes struggle to improve their reading. Pupils sometimes struggle to understand and interpret higher level word problems in mathematics.
- Too few lessons are currently outstanding across all year groups. A small proportion of lessons require further improvement.
- Activities in lessons do not always fully meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The criteria by which pupils can judge their own success are occasionally unclear.
- Some parents do not yet feel able to fully support their children's learning and well-being. A small number of parents and carers have concerns about pupils' behaviour and safety.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 part lessons and visited six lessons during a learning walk. Ten observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors observed leaders giving feedback to teachers.
- Inspectors observed teaching in English, mathematics, science, physical education (PE), information and communication technology (ICT), history, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils reading and observed a reading support class.
- Inspectors held meetings with school staff, the Chair of the shadow Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector also held an extended telephone conversation with the Chair of the Interim Executive Board.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's information for tracking pupils' progress; the monitoring of teaching; anonymised records of teacher appraisal; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. They also met with four representative groups of pupils from Years 3 to 6.
- Inspectors met with a group of parents and carers and talked to parents at the school gates. They also looked at other information about parental engagement and home-school communication, including the school's website, prospectus and newsletters. There were no responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- This was the fifth visit since the school had been judged to require special measures. At the last monitoring visit, in June 2012, the school had made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at its previous inspection.

Inspection team

Chris Wood, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- In this larger-than-average-sized junior school, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is more than double the national average, at 56%.
- Most of the pupils on roll are from minority ethnic groups. The main ethnic groups in the school are Pakistani, African, Bangladeshi and Indian. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. These pupils' needs mainly relate to moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress that all pupils make in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the effective teaching of reading is continually revisited in staff training
 - supporting all pupils, particularly those of lower ability, to read more regularly and widely.
- Helping pupils to practise their skills of comprehension and interpretation regularly in all subjects, but particularly for boys and the more able in mathematics.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in all year groups, by:
 - ensuring that activities are always fully matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities
 - giving pupils very clear criteria against which they can check if they have been successful and made good or better progress in their learning.
- Help parents and carers to get more involved in supporting their children's learning and well-being, by:
 - organising more frequent opportunities for parents and carers to find out how they can help their children to learn, particularly in terms of their reading development
 - ensuring communication between the school and home is even more clear and personalised
 - enabling parents and carers to work in closer partnership with the school to improve the good behaviour and safety further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- A large majority of pupils now make good progress in their learning. The most able pupils often make quick progress. Progress in writing, which has been a school focus, has also been strong.
- The progress made by some pupils in reading, particularly those who are of lower ability, has been slower. These pupils are now making faster progress as a result of improved teaching and better focused support for their wider reading.
- Some higher ability pupils, particularly boys, have made slower progress in mathematics. These pupils sometimes have difficulties in understanding higher level test questions. An increased focus on developing the pupils' vocabulary and skills of comprehension and interpretation is helping pupils to overcome this difficulty.
- Overall, current attainment is now broadly in line with the national average. Teachers have helped most pupils to catch up well from low starting points. The attainment of those Year 6 pupils who took the National Curriculum tests in 2012 was the highest for five years. These pupils had made rapid progress since the school was judged to require special measures. Although their performance in English was better than in mathematics, the proportion of pupils that attained the highest level in mathematics was double the national average.
- There is no discernible variation in the achievement of pupils from different minority ethnic groups or for those who speak English as an additional language. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs now achieve equally well.
- The funding received to support pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium has been spent well. A range of approaches have been used, including extra teaching and homework clubs. Overall, the average point scores of those pupils who took the National Curriculum tests in 2012 were in line with the average for similar pupils and above average for English. Overall, these Year 6 pupils made better progress than other pupils in the school and attained more highly than their peers in reading. This demonstrates good value for money.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly. It is usually good and a steadily increasing proportion is outstanding. However, this is not yet consistent across all year groups. A small and diminishing proportion of teaching requires further improvement.
- Pupils consistently told inspectors that lessons were fun, practical and challenging. Pupils in Year 6 said they were making faster progress this year because teachers explained things more clearly, gave better advice, and set 'even better if' targets that helped them to improve their work. Pupils in Year 3 impressed the inspector when they spontaneously discussed experiments they had been doing in science, using plasticine to explore which shapes sink or float and what effect 'loads' have on buoyancy.
- The quality of writing has improved strongly because teachers are better able to demonstrate successful writing and pupils have regular opportunities to write for sustained periods during the Big Write. Parents and carers told inspectors that this initiative had helped them to better understand how to support their children's learning. Some parents are less confident in helping their children to improve their reading skills.
- Teachers are helping pupils to better understand and interpret what they read, particularly when texts are more difficult. Recent training has reinforced teachers' understanding of the teaching of letters and sounds and spelling strategies. However, training on reading needs to be revisited regularly and pupils need more frequent opportunities to practise reading in school and at home.
- Marking is regular and generally consistent. The best marking encourages pupils to respond to their teachers' comments by correcting or improving work. Homework is set regularly. Parents and carers said that this was an improvement and most appreciated the introduction of a homework record book.

- Teachers plan together well and lessons are consistent across year groups. In most lessons pupils move quickly between activities because good routines have been established. Other adults work well alongside teachers; their role in lessons is usually clear. For example, pupils enjoyed questioning one teaching assistant who took on the role of Guy Fawkes in a lesson about the Gunpowder Plot.
- In an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils made rapid progress because the teacher dealt with misconceptions quickly and helped pupils to consolidate their problem solving strategies. In this lesson, pupils were actively encouraged to help shape the criteria by which they would judge their own success.
- In an outstanding science lesson, pupils of all abilities demonstrated impressive recent prior learning when discussing micro-organisms, illnesses and the work of famous scientists. Importantly, the developmental work that the teacher had planned for this lesson was precisely matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils; each activity was carefully designed so that pupils were challenged to make excellent progress in relation to their personal targets.
- In the lessons where the teaching is less effective the activities, although relevant and interesting, are less well matched to the full range of pupils' abilities. In addition, explanations do not always clearly identify the criteria against which pupils can evaluate whether they have been successful in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite, friendly and engaging. They made inspectors feel very welcome and talked openly with confidence, thoughtfulness and good humour. Their positive attitudes are underpinned by an impressive understanding and awareness of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, and of important values such as tolerance and respect. They are a credit to their parents and carers.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying is rare and when it happens is dealt with well. They understand the different types of bullying that exist and how to keep themselves safe whether in school, outside or online.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and improving. Inspectors agree; they often saw behaviour that was exemplary. Behaviour in the playground is generally good but sometimes lively. Inspectors observed pupils at play during break and lunch. Pupils were well supervised and most were sensible. However, inspectors agree with pupils that, occasionally, a lack of space can lead to minor disagreements, particularly when games overlap.
- Attendance is now in line with, or better than, the national average in all year groups. The school celebrates good attendance and punctuality. There were cheers when the best attending class was announced in the Year 3 and Year 4 assembly. The importance of good attendance and punctuality is promoted clearly through the school's weekly newsletter. Good systems are in place to track attendance and punctuality.
- For the most part, parents and carers agree that behaviour is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. A small number of parents raised concerns about the safety of pupils at the end of the school day and the way the school had dealt with specific incidents of bullying. The inspector investigated these concerns and found that there were clear routines and procedures in place to keep children safe. Incidents of bullying were investigated promptly and fully. Nevertheless, the lead inspector and executive headteacher agree that follow-up communication between the school and home could be more personalised and more could be done to enable all parents to work closely in partnership with the school to improve good behaviour and safety further.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher is an inspirational leader. She is well supported by a dynamic senior

team. Teaching and support staff are dedicated. Together, they have transformed the school. The local authority has also helped the school to improve teaching and leadership.

- Systems for keeping children safe are robust; they are compliant with the requirements and there are good working partnerships with external agencies.
- An uncompromising focus on strengthening the quality of teaching, supported by effective training and good recruitment, has had a discernible impact on improving pupils' achievement. Leaders monitor teaching systematically. Monitoring is well integrated with the school's systems for teacher appraisal. Teachers' targets are developmental and salary progression is now based on measurable criteria linked to pupils' good or better progress.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress are robust; they enable leaders to identify clearly any gaps in pupils' learning and put in place appropriate support that helps pupils to catch up.
- Middle leaders are involved in a range of monitoring activities and enthusiastically lead the work of their teams. Some staff are new to the school. They have settled quickly and are already effective. However, it will take time before the full impact of their good work can be seen on outcomes for pupils.
- The good progress of different groups of pupils is evidence of the school's successful promotion of equal opportunities. Most pupils, irrespective of background, make good progress, although progress in reading and mathematics is generally slower than in writing. Evaluation of the school's spending of funds available for pupils eligible for the pupil premium shows that these pupils make the same good progress as their peers. Gaps in achievement are closing steadily and are narrower than the national average.
- Pupils now have the same access to a stimulating and practical curriculum; the subjects pupils are taught successfully develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Roles such as peer mentors or class representatives help develop leadership skills. Pupils extend their talents and learn new skills in the varied clubs, be it in dance or drama, badminton or tag rugby, sewing or German.
- Most parents and carers recognise the big improvements that have been made since the previous inspection. They appreciate the weekly newsletters, opportunities to find out how to help their children learn or stay safe, and the warm welcome they received from office staff and teachers at the recent well-attended consultation evening. Nevertheless, some parents find it more difficult to work closely with the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although relatively newly formed, the interim executive board is already very effective. Its skilled members are fully involved in the life of the school, making regular contact with staff and pupils and running well-received staff training, such as that on reading. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The interim executive board ensures procedures for keeping pupils safe are monitored closely. It scrutinises information about pupils' progress analytically, including that for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Its advice has already challenged leaders to further improve the school's approach to tracking and evaluation. It checks the school's spending decisions closely and ensures that staff pay is justified by teaching performance and the pupils' results. The interim executive board and the shadow governing body are working together closely to ensure that a future handover of powers to a full governing body is successful and well timed.

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

Unique reference number	102834
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	398149

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	David Radomsky
Headteacher	Joan McGrath
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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