

# Woolton Hill Junior School

Woolton Hill, Newbury, RG20 8XE

**Inspection dates** 16–17 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Attainment has risen and is now well above average, particularly in reading and mathematics. Overall pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Effective strategies to improve teaching have been introduced and teaching is now consistently good, and occasionally outstanding.
- Strengths in the teaching of mathematics and reading mean that most pupils make outstanding progress in these areas.
- Strategies to improve the teaching of writing are having a positive effect and progress in writing is accelerating, particularly for older pupils.
- The outstanding behaviour of pupils contributes strongly to the positive climate within the school.
- Senior leaders and governors have a highly accurate picture about the work of the school and are relentless in sharing their high ambition for the pupils' learning.
- The previous decline in the progress of pupils has been tackled vigorously and quickly because senior leaders lead by example, providing the highest quality teaching.
- The headteacher ensures each teacher is clear what they can do to improve their practice, and has the support to do so.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not yet as rapid as in reading and mathematics, particularly for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils do not always use the targets they have in writing, to help them improve their writing in other subjects.
- Writing tasks are not often enough linked to real-world experiences.
- Younger pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to the comments teachers make in their books.
- While teaching has improved rapidly over the past two years, and is consistently good, there is not yet enough teaching which is outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by seven teachers. They also observed sessions led by teaching assistants, to support groups of pupils. Some of the observations were done together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed documents showing the school’s self-evaluation, records of monitoring of teaching and the performance of pupils, teachers’ records of how well pupils are doing, and their plans for lessons. Inspectors also looked at the documents and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe, that behaviour is managed effectively, and records about pupils’ attendance.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, teachers who lead subjects or areas of the school, with governors and pupils, and spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone. They also looked at the 59 responses to the online survey for Ofsted, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents before school.

## Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school, with three mixed-age classes for Years 3 and 4, and three mixed-age classes for Years 5 and 6.
- Almost all pupils are White British. A very few pupils are from a range of other heritages. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding to support pupils, is below average. This includes pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or children looked after by the local authority.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. There have been a number of other changes in the teaching staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, the minimum expectations of progress and attainment for pupils.
- There is no alternative provision at the school.

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

- Increase the consistency of progress and raise attainment in writing, to match that in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - all pupils use their targets in writing to help them improve their writing in other subjects
  - teachers give pupils more opportunities to link their writing to real-world experiences
  - younger pupils respond more regularly to the high quality comments teachers make when marking pupils' books.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has worked hard to overcome a previous decline in achievement and as a result the progress has accelerated rapidly and attainment has risen quickly over the past two years.
- When pupils join the school they already have skills and knowledge which are above average. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made outstanding progress in reading and mathematics, and good progress in their writing. They reach levels of attainment which are above average in writing and significantly above average in reading and mathematics. This means that overall their achievement is good.
- Progress in writing is not yet as rapid because strategies to tackle this aspect are more recent. Occasionally, written tasks are not related to real-world situations, but rather theoretical so they lack purpose. In the best lessons, pupils use their writing targets when they are writing in other subjects, but this is not yet consistent.
- Work in pupils' books, and during lessons, shows that good progress is now typical, and the rate of progress increases for older pupils. Parents and older pupils said how much this has improved since the new headteacher arrived.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in learning English because of the support they receive from adults and other pupils, who help them to quickly become confident speakers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, because teachers carefully check how well they are doing and that their needs are being met effectively.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium also make good progress and are helped to catch up with other pupils. This happens because they get extra support from well-trained teaching assistants, extra opportunities to read to an adult, as well as opportunities to participate in clubs and the residential trips.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent training and opportunities to share best practice mean that teaching is now almost always at least good. Senior leaders provide role models for the very best practice to ensure pupils make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. Previous weaknesses have been tackled robustly so that inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Strengths in teaching include the good subject knowledge of teachers and good use of questions to check what pupils know, which help teachers adapt the lesson as it proceeds. There is a strong sense of teamwork between teachers, and with teaching assistants. Strategies to develop skills in reading, through linking sounds and letters (phonics), are well embedded and pupils are confident, avid readers.
- Teaching assistants are particularly well trained and provide very good support for pupils who need it, while helping them to be as independent as possible. This helps these pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to overcome the difficulties they face and catch up with other pupils.
- Teachers use the accurate information they have about how well pupils are doing, to plan interesting tasks which meet the needs of different groups. This is made easier because pupils work in classes alongside pupils of similar ability. In an outstanding mathematics lesson, the quick pace of the introduction, well-prepared resources, and high expectations of the adults meant that these Years 5 and 6 pupils made rapid progress in using algebra to solve problems.
- Strategies to improve the teaching of writing are newer and not yet as well embedded in all lessons. For example, in the best lessons, teachers refer to the displays that help pupils to be ambitious in the sentences they construct, but this is not always the case. Tasks are not often

enough linked with real-life experiences.

- The topics around which teachers plan the work for pupils are interesting, often enhanced by a trip or visitor to the school. This well-planned curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge systematically, particularly within mixed-age classes.
- Marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do next. Older pupils respond to this particularly well and often add their own comments reflecting on what they have learnt each lesson. However, younger pupils have fewer opportunities to respond, and this means that marking is not always as effective as it could be.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have targets in reading, writing and mathematics, to help them know what they need to be doing next. At the moment these are often chosen by the teachers, who also indicate when pupils have achieved them. However, pupils are increasingly involved in this as well and are becoming more confident at identifying the evidence that shows when they have reached their target.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils are immensely polite to adults and kind to each other at all times. They seldom need reminding about the high standards of behaviour that are expected, and help to make sure that learning can carry on without interruption.
- They are keen to do their work to the best of their ability and this has helped to improve their achievement. Their highly positive attitudes to school mean that attendance has risen so that it is well above average.
- When they join the school they settle in smoothly because of the links with the infant school and the strategies to help them feel comfortable at school as quickly as possible.
- Pupils like it when they get the opportunity to give each other feedback about how well they have done in their work, and the frequency of this is increasing. They are very understanding of different abilities and accepting of differences, so all groups of pupils get along very well.
- The junior leadership team are excellent role models. Pupils on the school council help to ensure that any pupils' concerns about health and safety are noted and addressed.
- Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to think deeply about the world around them, and reflect on their role within this. In particular, they like grappling with the difficult issues they discuss during lessons looking at philosophy.
- Pupils say any form of bullying is very rare. They fully understand what constitutes bullying such as persistent name-calling and cyber bullying. If any unkindness does happen it is quickly dealt with. Pupils say that there is always someone they can talk to if they are worried and are confident that the adults keep them safe.
- They feel safe in school and know what they can do to help themselves stay safe in a range of different situations, including when using the internet.
- Parents commented that behaviour is excellent and that pupils develop into very confident young people, ready to take on the challenges of the next stage of their education.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Since taking up post at the school, the headteacher has developed a strong team and ensured that senior leaders and the governors have a very accurate view about the performance of the school. There is an uncompromising drive for every pupil to reach the highest levels of achievement and personal development.
- Senior leaders have looked closely at reasons for the previous decline in the progress of pupils. They have established clear expectations of teachers, and made sure that effective strategies are used to increase the rate of progress for all groups of pupils. They have shared the vision for making sure that the work of the school is of the highest quality. Consequently, achievement has

improved rapidly over the past two years and continues to do so.

- Senior leaders provide excellent role models of the very best practice and make sure all adults understand their part in giving pupils the best possible opportunities to succeed. Opportunities to plan work together, watch colleagues teach, and discussions about what makes learning most effective help to ensure that teaching continues to improve.
  - The approach to reading ensures pupils reach high levels of literacy. The curriculum gives pupils highly positive experiences which they enjoy a great deal. For example, pupils were particularly looking forward to re-enacting the Battle of Bosworth, following on from their work in lessons.
  - Opportunities to look at philosophical issues and debate different viewpoints help pupils to tackle some of the bigger questions of life and to reflect on the world around them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well supported.
  - Together with the governors, senior leaders make sure that all requirements for keeping pupils safe are met and that all adults are trained regularly, so that they know what their responsibilities are.
  - The local authority initially supported the headteacher in identifying the issues leading to the previous decline in progress. The level of support required has quickly diminished as the school has developed the wider leadership and capacity to bring about and sustain improvements.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are well informed because they find out for themselves how well the school is doing, alongside the high quality of information they receive from the school. They have benefited from training, for example to understand what data show about how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools. They are unflinching in their determination to identify any issues and hold the school to account for addressing these. They carefully consider how the school's budget is spent and focus well on providing pupils with excellent teaching and resources. In particular, they review how the additional funding for the pupil premium is used and check it has a good impact towards improving the learning of those pupils who are eligible. They also make sure that decisions about the pay of teachers encourage the highest quality of teaching.
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## 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>	116076
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401557

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Hodgkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28–29 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 253364
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