

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Bridge Road West, Stevenage, SG1 2NU

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Their good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All groups achieve well in the school's highly stimulating and happy atmosphere.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils work hard. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of interesting work that they enjoy.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They take a high level of responsibility for their behaviour.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive.
- The headteacher's drive to improve the school is enthusiastically shared by staff. Leaders, including the governing body, successfully use training to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally the pace of learning in lessons slows because introductions to lessons go on for too long.
- Progress is not as quick in writing as it is in reading and mathematics because children in the Nursery and Reception do not do enough writing.
- Activities that Reception children choose for themselves do not always have a clear learning purpose.
- Pupils do not have sufficient time to broaden their vocabulary or to review and correct their written work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching in all classes. They visited 17 lessons taught by eight teachers as well as sessions for small groups of pupils or individuals, led by teaching assistants. The headteacher joined an inspector for one of these visits.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, teachers and several governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at a range of evidence, including records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, behaviour logs and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the work in pupils' books.
- The views of 49 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspectors took account of the views of several parents who talked to an inspector at the school gate.

Inspection team

Gerald Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Saunders

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The is an average-sized school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services) is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching and rates of progress to outstanding by:
 - making sure that introductions to lessons do not go on for too long
 - always providing children with clear goals to achieve in their chosen activity when they are working by themselves in the Reception classes.
- Improve attainment and progress in writing by providing:
 - more time for children to write in the Nursery and Reception classes
 - greater opportunities for pupils to broaden and use their vocabulary to express their ideas clearly
 - providing more time for pupils to review and correct their written work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with low levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning in the Nursery and Reception classes to reach below-average attainment at the end of their Reception Year.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics to reach average attainment when they move to junior school.
- Pupils are keen to read and do so regularly. In mathematics, pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems are well developed.
- Progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics across the school. This is because children do not spend enough time developing and practising this skill in the Nursery and Reception classes. Additionally there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of vocabulary to precisely write down their thoughts and make corrections to their writing.
- The rate of progress in the Reception classes sometimes slows when children are not clear enough about what they need to do in activities they choose so that they can make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs concentrate well in lessons. They make similar progress to their peers because of good teaching, often in small groups, by well-qualified adults who know pupils' needs well.
- The gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates at the end of Year 2 last year was two terms in English and mathematics. This gap is closing quickly. In the Nursery classes and in Year 1, the gap has now closed and in Reception and Year 2 it is under one term. This shows the school uses pupil-premium funding well. For example, it is used to provide these pupils with help to catch up with work when they have fallen behind and to provide them with support to raise their aspirations.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' questions are probing and make pupils think deeply. They use resources such as computers and educational games effectively to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Test results and other data are used well to plan demanding tasks that make sure all pupils make good progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes learning takes place inside and outdoors in an exciting setting, which develops children's understanding well. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Teachers do not always provide enough direction in child-chosen work in the Reception classes to ensure children make good progress. Not enough time is allocated to writing in these classes.
- Teachers plan many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 lesson, pupils were reflecting deeply on the consequences of their choice of behaviour.

- The pace of learning occasionally slows when, for example, introductions last for too long.
- Teaching assistants and nursery nurses give valuable support, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. For example, they take notes on pupils' progress and pass them to the teacher to help plan the next steps in their learning.
- Marking and feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough time to act upon this good advice by correcting their written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents, school records and discussions with pupils confirm that the outstanding behaviour seen by inspectors in lessons and around the school is the norm.
- Pupils are very polite and courteous, enjoy school and are very keen to learn. This is reflected in their improving attendance. They cooperate and work very well together in groups.
- For their age they take high levels of responsibility. For example, pupils help leaders plan school visits. They make sure their own behaviour is impeccable so that lessons can proceed without interruption.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say that bullying is very rare. Pupils are highly confident that any bullying would be quickly sorted out by the school.
- Pupils feel very safe and know precisely how to keep themselves and others safe, for example when crossing the road.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, including the governing body, aim high. Since the previous inspection, progress for more-able pupils has improved. Additionally, the actions taken by leaders have led to a marked rise in attendance. This shows the school is well placed to improve further.
- Leaders make regular checks on teaching and the quality of learning. The follow-up from these successfully tackles weaknesses to improve teachers' skills. For example, successful training has improved the staff's teaching and support for pupils with speech-and-language difficulties.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They use this information to provide good individual support. The help provided for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is very effective.
- The school makes good use of educational consultants to improve teaching and leadership. The local authority has made a valuable contribution in checking that the school's view of its performance is accurate.
- Parents expressed positive views about their children's progress, teaching and the leadership of the school. The school provides meetings that are well attended by parents, for example about reading. These help parents to support their child's learning at home. The school is highly

successful in supporting parents who find working with school difficult.

- The way subjects are taught strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding and respect for cultures that are different from their own. The school organises a wide range of clubs for its pupils.
- Leaders are aware of the relative weakness in writing and have recently allocated more time to this subject. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these plans.
- The school completes all statutory checks on the suitability of staff to be employed. Child-protection training for staff is thorough, and leaders implement child-protection policies rigorously.
- Leaders have a clear commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. This is shown in the good progress made by all groups of pupils, from all backgrounds. The school fosters good relations with outside agencies and other schools to improve pupils' life chances even more.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body asks searching questions of the school and makes regular and accurate checks on the rate of improvement. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are achieving. They make sure that the school is spending the pupil-premium funding on those eligible for it and check how effectively the money is spent. Governors fully support staff training and are keen to improve their own skills. Governors see that teachers' targets are specific and challenging and that pay rises and promotion are linked with performance. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. The governing body's understanding of the information published about the school is mostly well developed and governors are able to judge how well the school is doing compared to similar schools.

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	117323
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	412639

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Akers
Headteacher	Usha Dhorajiwala
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2009
Telephone number	01438 216070
Fax number	01438 216171
Email address	admin@woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk

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