

Warden Hill Junior School

Birdsfoot Lane, Luton, LU3 2DN

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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 | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Warden Hill Junior School is a safe and secure place. Pupils are happy to come to school. They like their teachers, enjoy their school work and feel valued.
- The school is well organised and managed. The senior leadership team works continually to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Parents are fully involved in school life.
- The well-informed governing body supports the school effectively. They ensure that finances are used to the best advantage of pupils and hold the school to account for its actions.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in all subjects and, by the end of Key Stage 2, reach standards above the national averages in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Teachers have established good relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. They are enthusiastic and plan lessons that interest pupils. Homework is used effectively to complement work in class.
- Pupils behave well and get along with one another with little friction. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils achieve less well in writing than they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' questions do not always extend pupils' thinking.
- Teachers' plans do not always take sufficient account of what pupils know and can do.
- The marking of pupils' written work is not consistent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, including three which were observed jointly with the headteacher. They also looked at pupils’ written work in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other school leaders, and with a representative of the local authority. An inspector spoke briefly by telephone to the Lantern behaviour support manager at a local primary school.
- Inspectors spoke formally to two groups of pupils, and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to pupils reading and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Several of the school’s documents were examined. These included: the school’s own evaluation of its performance and its development plan; information about pupils’ progress and the support given to pupils with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records about behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by parents as they arrived to drop off their children.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| James McVeigh, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Vreta Bagilhole | Additional Inspector |
| Susan Cox | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Warden Hill Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes in each year group from Year 3 to Year 6.
- Around half of pupils come from a White British background and the remainder from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. Fewer pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (the extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from a family with a parent in the armed forces) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is similar to the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school, in partnership with the neighbouring infant school, runs a breakfast club.
- Off-site alternative provision is available for pupils with behavioural problems.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing still further so that it matches their achievement in reading and mathematics by encouraging pupils to practise writing longer pieces of work for a range of purposes in different subjects.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - sharing widely the best teaching practice that exists in the school, such as in marking and in questioning pupils
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities and tasks that will stretch the most-able pupils and are suitably demanding for less-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is rising. In 2013, a greater proportion of pupils attained Level 5 in all Key Stage 2 tests than the national average, although performance in writing lagged behind that in reading and mathematics. Pupils reached standards significantly above the national average in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils made good progress in mathematics due to improvements in mathematics teaching. This was a recommendation in the last inspection report. The school's records of pupils' performance show that pupils also made good progress in reading and writing. Pupils' work in books shows that they are continuing to make good progress in all subjects.
- Pupils are developing their basic writing skills well. For example, some pupils in Year 6 have created their own well-crafted and well-presented curriculum vitae. They are taught handwriting skills, punctuation and grammar effectively, and homework regularly includes learning how to spell new words. However, pupils do not routinely apply these skills in extended writing practice.
- The school effectively encourages pupils to read widely and often, including by helping parents to support pupils' reading at home and the use of reading diaries. Regular guided reading lessons, together with focused extra support for those who need it, help pupils develop good reading skills and inspire a love of reading.
- Pupils develop a secure understanding of number facts. They develop good strategies for multiplication and division; and they know their multiplication tables, learned through homework and 'speed table' competitions. Gifted and talented pupils have suitably challenging lessons with specialist mathematics teachers and regularly use a software programme to practise and extend their mathematical skills.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide a range of extra support for eligible pupils. The impact of this support is closely monitored and these pupils are making accelerated progress. The attainment gap between them and their peers is closing. In 2013, eligible pupils appeared to do worse than their peers. They were around four terms behind in English and mathematics. However, a significant proportion had special educational needs; the gap in attainment between those without special educational needs and other pupils was around two terms.
- Recent changes in the organisation and management of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has ensured that they make good progress. This is through effective support programmes that are well matched to their needs. Similar changes for pupils who speak English as an additional language have resulted in them also making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers get on well with their pupils. They are enthusiastic in their teaching so that pupils are engaged and want to work. Teachers know individual pupils well, refer to them by name and make good use of appropriate praise so that pupils feel valued. Pupils' behaviour is managed effectively, so that usually little time is lost correcting misbehaviour.
- Classrooms are bright, stimulating places for learning. Helpful advice and examples of pupils' work displayed in each room provide good support for learning.

- Teachers have high expectations for the quantity and quality of pupils' work. They explain clearly the outcomes they expect for each activity and provide suitable guidance so that pupils know what they have to do. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson, pupils were given a simple list of questions as a guide for collecting important facts about Shakespeare's life from the internet which helped them manage what otherwise may have been a daunting task. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and support learning well.
- Pupils speak confidently in class and listen carefully to one another. Teachers encourage pupils to share their ideas with the whole class and with their 'learning partner'. Teachers often use skilful questioning to extend pupils' understanding further. They give pupils time for reflection and emphasise that 'wrong' answers can be important steps in learning.
- Teachers keep parents informed about pupils' progress and engage them in helping children at home through the home-school diary. For example, pupils are supported at home to complete extended and engaging activities in their learning logs, such as researching the story of Robin Hood and the life of Sir Isaac Newton.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection so that pupils' progress over time is good. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly and usually plan suitable activities, based on assessment information, which will stretch all pupils. Some activities inspire and motivate pupils to make outstanding progress, for example, when Year 4 pupils, dressed as King Arthur's knights, worked tirelessly to find out all the ways three knights could sit at the Round Table. Occasionally, some pupils find work too easy, while others find it too hard and have to wait for extra help.
- Teachers mostly follow the school's marking policy and mark pupils' written work regularly. Pupils understand the colour-coded marking system and respond to any clear advice about how to improve their work. Some marking of literacy work is exemplary, and an ongoing dialogue between teacher and pupil about the improving quality of work develops. However, such practice is not consistent across the school.
- Sometimes teachers do not use questioning well enough to extend pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson were asked to name angles shown on the board but none were asked to explain why they gave the responses they did to reveal any misconceptions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy school and get on well with teachers and class mates. They say that teachers make the lessons interesting and readily help them if they get stuck. Parents say their children are happy at school and teachers look after them well. Warden Hill Junior is a welcoming and happy school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They usually listen carefully to their teachers and cooperate well with one another when working together or sharing ideas. They know the school rules and understand how their behaviour affects their learning. They are keen to earn merits and be recognised in assembly or be named in the Golden Book. Occasionally, when work is not matched to their ability or is boring, some pupils become restless and lose concentration.
- When moving around the school, pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite towards others and greet visitors pleasantly. Pupils always have someone to play with at play time because, they say, they look out for anyone who looks lonely. Pupils new to the school have a 'class buddy' who helps them to settle in and make new friends. Pupils have good opportunities to

take on extra responsibilities, such as school council representative, house captain or prefect.

- Behaviour is monitored closely by school staff and incidents of misbehaviour are recorded well. The number of incidents of poor behaviour is low. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying for their age; they say that bullying is rare and is sorted out quickly. Prompt and effective action, including involving parents, is taken by the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Good shading and shelter is provided by awnings and pupils have interesting playground equipment to explore. Play times are well supervised by adults.
- Health and safety is promoted well. Pupils know about how to eat healthily and how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have learned how to stay safe when using the internet in information and communication technology lessons. Appropriately trained teachers and other adults follow child-protection guidelines closely.
- Good attendance is given a high profile and is recognised and celebrated at the school. Any absences are followed up promptly. Pupils attend regularly and attendance figures have been around the national average in recent years and improving. In the current year so far, attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team, well supported by the governing body, provides a strong and clear direction for the school. The school has moved quickly in response to the last inspection. Teaching, including marking, has improved and governors are more effective in their role.
- Leaders ensure that the school runs smoothly day-to-day and that the warm and purposeful atmosphere is maintained. They have produced an effective school development plan, based on an accurate knowledge of the school, which is closely monitored.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly to ensure that pupils are continually moving towards their challenging achievement targets. Effective strategies are put in place to provide extra support for any pupils who may be slipping behind. Information about pupils' progress is analysed well. Teachers have targets to meet that ensure all pupils make good progress.
- There is a strong focus on improving teaching practice. School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching by observing lessons and looking at teachers' planning, marking and the quality of pupils' work. Teachers and teaching assistants have good opportunities for training, within school, on external courses and by visiting other schools. Teaching together and seeing colleagues teach are also methods used to spread good teaching practice more widely.
- Teachers new to the profession are well supported. They gain wider experience by visiting other schools, receive focused training from the local authority and are mentored effectively by a senior colleague. Year leaders work alongside senior leaders to develop their skills in monitoring teaching and managing teaching teams.
- The school fosters good relationships with parents. Workshops and information on the school's website support parents well to help their children at home. The school's family worker engages well with difficult-to-reach families. Parents express great appreciation for the work the school is doing and the approachability and helpfulness of staff.

- Warden Hill Junior school is fully inclusive and ensures equality of opportunity for all and no discrimination. For example, the school provides financial support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium to attend school clubs and go on residential trips. Well-targeted additional help supports all pupils to make good progress.
- The school offers a broad and balanced range of subjects, enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, such as to the zoo and farm. Music, art, sport and information and communication technology are particularly prominent. Enrichment weeks, such as those focusing on Shakespeare or science topics, inspire pupils in their work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, including through assemblies, and an enrichment week for languages. Pupils are linked with another school with a wider mix of cultures to share lessons and visit each other's schools. Pupils develop an understanding of and a respect for people from different backgrounds.
- The school uses the primary school sport funding well so that pupils participate in more sporting activities. For example, local sports specialists share their teaching expertise with staff and pupils have the opportunity to learn a new sport, such as lacrosse.
- The school keeps a close eye on health and safety issues. All necessary safety training is up-to-date and risk assessments, such as those for outside visits, are recorded well. Close contact is maintained with the school providing alternative placements to ensure pupils' good attendance and progress.
- The local authority recognises clear improvements brought about at the school and provide good support through reviews of the school's performance and training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good range of relevant skills and experience. This is augmented by regular training to understand information about school performance. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching, pupils' progress through reports from senior leaders and their own regular focused visits. They provide strong support to the school, including by linking individual governors to particular aspects of the school's work, such as safety, and question the school closely about how plans will affect pupils' progress.
 - Governors are involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher and ensuring the school's funds are sagely spent. They ensure the rewards teachers receive are warranted and that the school makes sound financial decisions, for example, in allocating the pupil premium effectively. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 109562 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 441154 |

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.

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 353 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Laura Friedner |
| Headteacher | Mark Welch |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01582 591386 |
| Fax number | 01582 561449 |
| Email address | warden.hill.juniors.admin@luton.gov.uk |

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