

Woolston Infant School

Florence Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9DB

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school, which she leads with commitment and drive. She has the good support of senior and middle leaders and of the governing body. As a result, teaching and achievement are continuing to improve.
- The school's ethos is positive and highly inclusive.
- Responses to the online survey of parents were extremely positive about the school. Every parent who took part agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Leaders regularly check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They evaluate this evidence accurately. This leads to improvement planning of good quality.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years has been consistently above average.
- All groups of pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' good progress is the result of the good quality of the teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They show positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They say there is little bullying.
- Rates of attendance are above average.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception classes. As a result of the good teaching, they make good progress to reach broadly average levels of attainment.
- Children feel safe and secure in the early years.
- Governors are extremely well informed and knowledgeable about the school. They adopt a rigorous approach to their role, and hold the school to good account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Very occasionally, teachers do not communicate sufficiently clearly or precisely the purpose of the work before setting tasks for pupils to complete; pupils then make slower progress in their learning.
- Teachers' feedback to pupils from marking their work does not always point out what they need to do next in order to improve.
- Teachers do not consistently give pupils opportunities to put any advice about improvement into practice.
- The school's target-setting arrangements for pupils do not help them sufficiently to understand what they need to do to attain higher standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. They heard a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the Chair, Vice Chair and four other members of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 46 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, performance management, the use of extra government funding and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqui Good

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an infant school that is smaller than average in size.
- The school is situated in the south east sector of Southampton.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is nearly one third of all pupils. This is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is less than one in every ten pupils. This is broadly average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- A new special educational needs coordinator took up the role from September 2014.
- The after-school club is managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.
- Among the school's accreditations are the Eco Schools (Green Flag), the Healthy School (Enhanced), and the Sing Up (Gold) awards, and the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the ICT Mark.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best by improving the consistency with which teachers:
 - ensure that all pupils understand precisely the learning purposes of the tasks that they set
 - make sure that pupils clearly understand the next steps in their learning through improved feedback from marking
 - provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on and apply teachers' advice about improvement
 - link target-setting more closely to the assessment of learning in the revised curriculum so that pupils understand what they need to do to reach higher standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school and brings a strong drive to the leadership. This results in the school's inclusive ethos and positive climate for learning. Senior and middle leaders, the governing body, and other members of staff share her vision. Responses to the questionnaire for school staff were unanimous in agreeing that they know what they are trying to achieve as a school. Furthermore, almost all expressed their pride as members of the school.
- School leaders check how much progress pupils are making on a half-termly basis. If these checks show that any pupils are not making the progress expected of them, leaders make sure that class teachers and assistants provide additional support to help them catch up. The headteacher and other leaders also make regular checks on pupils' learning and make observations of teaching. The deputy headteacher acts as a coach (mentor) to the teaching staff. This has helped to maintain the quality of teaching. Senior leaders analyse in detail the findings from checking activities. The school's resulting self-evaluation is accurate and leads to school improvement planning of good quality.
- The school's consistently above average attainment and the good progress of pupils indicate the effectiveness of middle leaders, including the leaders of English and mathematics and of the early years. The new special educational needs coordinator is well informed and has begun to have a good impact.
- The school has developed a broad curriculum that engages pupils well. It gives good attention to reading, writing and mathematics. There are also effective links across subjects, providing opportunities to apply these skills. For example, teachers link work in literacy with the topic of the Great Fire of London. The role-play areas in classrooms reflect the accent on developing pupils' communication skills. Pupils have easy access to computers and often make good use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in their work. School assemblies provide opportunities for reflection as well as addressing such issues as road safety. There is a focus on outdoor education and on recycling and environmental issues. The school also has a good focus on singing. Such roles as school councillor and hall monitor provide pupils with experiences of representing others and of taking responsibility. There is good take-up of the out-of-school programme. The curriculum, assembly themes and the extra-curricular activities together make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Furthermore, the school is effective in fostering positive relationships.
- Leaders spend the funding from the primary sport premium to good effect. The school subscribes to the Southampton Schools Sports Partnership. Two teachers have undertaken courses in physical education in order to develop their skills to teach the subject. The school has employed specialist sports coaches to work with each year group to teach gymnastics, dance and games. This has extended the range of in-school provision. The school has set up additional clubs specifically to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils, and those who show ability at physical activities. The school is committed to promoting pupils' physical well-being.
- The school spends the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils in keeping with its vision statement, which aims to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination. This is used effectively. Leaders have employed additional staffing to provide further support for the learning of disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups of pupils. Other expenditure has included the employment of an attendance and welfare officer, and provision to support pupils' emotional literacy.
- Senior leaders ensure that the school fully meets all child protection and safeguarding requirements and these are effective.
- On the basis of a range of evidence, the local authority has judged that it continues to be a good school, which merits light-touch support only.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective and has formed a strong partnership with senior leaders. Governors are extremely well informed about all aspects of the school. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They understand the link between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching from the headteacher's reports and from national information about the school's performance. Governors take seriously their role in setting targets for the headteacher. They know about leaders' arrangements to set targets for other members of the teaching staff. They also assure themselves as to whether teachers merit salary progression. Governors know that the headteacher tackles any underperformance. They are knowledgeable about how the school spends its additional government funding. They have sought evidence that the school is using the funding appropriately, and are aware of the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Governors meet their statutory obligations. They also hold the school to good account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's warm and supportive ethos and adults' high expectations do much to encourage pupils' good behaviour. Pupils themselves say that other pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. In classrooms, they typically pay good attention to their teachers, and respond willingly to opportunities for active involvement in lessons.
- When pupils move around the school they do so sensibly. They enter and leave assemblies in an orderly and quiet way and enjoy participating fullheartedly in singing.
- At lunchtimes in the hall, pupils enjoy socialising quietly with others while they eat their meal.
- Pupils behave well in the playground. There is a 'buddy bench' for any pupils who might feel isolated, but in practice the good relationships between pupils mean that they rarely need to use it. School staff support positive behaviour by leading playtime games for pupils. Although most pupils act responsibly, there are occasional examples of undesirable conduct, for instance when pupils drop fruit on the playground rather than compost it, as expected.
- Almost all the parents who took part in the survey agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Nearly every member of staff who completed the questionnaire thought that behaviour is good, and is consistently well managed.
- Attendance is now above average with a below-average rate of persistent absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because 'wherever you go there is always an adult'. They learn how to keep safe and how to deal with risks, such as being wary of strangers. They know of the need to exercise care when using computers, and say they would involve an adult if use of the internet ever caused them concern.
- In their responses to the survey, every parent agreed that their children are safe in the school.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that there are few cases of bullying, and that adults quickly address any difficulties that occasionally arise.
- All the members of staff who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school deals effectively with cases of bullying.
- There have been no permanent and only one fixed-term exclusion in recent years.
- Those pupils who attend the after-school club have a safe and enjoyable experience.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' effective learning, including their good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, reflects the good quality of teaching. Pupils' consistently above average attainment every year is evidence of the positive impact of teaching over time.
- There is a high level of parental satisfaction with the impact of teaching. Every parent who took part in the online survey agreed that their children are well taught, and make good progress.
- The school's positive ethos and its warm climate for learning are a result of the skilful ways in which teachers and other adults foster good relationships with pupils.
- The headteacher holds high expectations of teachers. They, in turn, set high expectations for both pupils' achievement and their attitudes and behaviour. This also serves to promote the school's positive learning atmosphere.
- Teaching offers good levels of engagement and challenge for pupils. In an English lesson, one teacher, for instance, first read to pupils a letter that she had 'found' in her in-tray which purported to come from an author who was asking for help in finding more interesting words for his new story. Having cleverly captured pupils' interest, she then adeptly set challenging writing tasks for them.
- In a further instance, another teacher made frequent use of 'talk partners' (short conversations between pairs of pupils to rehearse an answer to a question) in a mathematics lesson. Pupils discussed strategies for solving 'word problems'. This prepared the pupils well for their mathematics tasks.
- Class teachers generally deploy assistants well so that they often make good contributions to pupils' learning and progress.
- The quality of teaching is good, though not yet consistently so. Just occasionally, teachers do not

communicate clearly and precisely the purpose of the work before they set tasks for pupils. Where this happens, pupils make much slower progress in understanding the learning.

- When teachers mark pupils' work, they often offer them praise for their efforts. However, teachers do not consistently indicate to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to reflect on teachers' advice about improvement and to apply their suggestions. Consequently, teachers' feedback to pupils does not encourage improvements in their learning to the extent that it could.
- On the target sheets in their books, pupils assess themselves on various 'I can' statements, and teachers respond to pupils' self-assessments. The school's present approach has some positive benefits. Nevertheless, target-setting arrangements do not contribute sufficiently to pupils' understanding of what they need to do to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. As the school develops its approach to assessment, there are good opportunities to re-consider how target setting for pupils could have greater impact on their progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. All groups of pupils make consistently good progress as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils' overall attainment in assessments at the end of Year 2 was well above the national average in 2014. Above average proportions of pupils reached the expected and the higher Level 3 standard in reading, writing and mathematics. These proportions were all higher than in the previous year.
- The school's results in 2012 and 2013 were also well above average in all three subjects.
- The school identifies more-able pupils from their attainment at the end of Year 1. More-able pupils in the current Year 2 have made at least good progress since then in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From lower starting points than others, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. In 2014, the attainment of these pupils was well above that of their peers nationally. This is because teachers and assistants give them well-judged support.
- Like other groups, the progress of the small numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good.
- All the parents who took part in the online survey agreed that their children are making good progress.
- In assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2014, the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school widened in reading, and much more slightly in writing and mathematics, in comparison with the previous year. The gap was the equivalent of one and three quarter terms in reading, one and a half terms in writing, but less than half a term in mathematics.
- A comparison between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally shows smaller gaps. In reading, the gap widened. In writing, the gap did not change, and in mathematics, there was no gap. The gap was the equivalent of about one term in reading, and slightly less in writing. In both cases, the gaps are smaller than those found nationally.
- The school's current evidence shows that disadvantaged pupils are presently making broadly comparable progress in all three subjects to that of all pupils.

The early years provision

is good

- When children first start at the school, their knowledge and skills are typically below those expected for their age. They make good progress across the Reception year, and develop a firm foundation for future learning.
- Progress in their personal and social skills, their physical development and their skills in listening and understanding are particularly good. By the end of the Reception year in 2013, the great majority of children reached the expected level in their personal, social and emotional development. A higher proportion reached expected levels in physical development and in communication and language skills. In 2014, markedly higher proportions of children reached expected levels in each of these areas of learning.
- In 2013, fewer children reached expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics than was the case nationally. By contrast, in 2014, the proportion of children reaching expected levels in reading and writing was similar to national figures. In mathematics, the school's performance exceeded national figures.
- Children's more rapid progress reflects the good quality of the teaching and the school's positive ethos. Teachers are skilled at creating strong working relationships with the children. They have high

expectations, and offer children good levels of challenge, resulting in successful learning. Teachers deploy the assistants well so that they effectively support the learning of different groups.

- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is very effective, and includes good use of the terms to describe sounds, linked to the actions associated with them. Teachers are also flexible in adjusting planned work to meet children's needs. Occasionally, however, teaching does not provide enough support to ensure that all groups meet the challenge set.
- Teaching engages children well. In one lesson, for instance, children enjoyed movement work in the role of pirates under the command of the ship's captain. Such teaching results in their positive attitudes to school, and enthusiasm for learning.
- The improved progress and higher attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage indicate that children are increasingly well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into school life. The ethos in the Reception area encourages children's active involvement. This is one reason why their behaviour is good. Teachers also encourage children to understand right from wrong, and to show respect towards adults and other children.
- Children feel safe and secure both in the outdoor space and in the classroom.
- There is good leadership of the early years. The leader promotes effective planning which ensures a good balance of activities led by adults and opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning. She has a good understanding of the implications for the early years team of whole-school priorities for improvement. This includes the drive to improve attainment in writing by groups of children at risk of underperformance.
- The early years staff work well with parents. The staff visit many of the wide range of pre-school settings before children first come to school, and pay home visits. The 'link books' and 'sound books' usefully support communication between home and school. In addition, the school finds imaginative ways of making contact with parents who may be hard to reach.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fully effective.

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	116110
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	443795

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Steege
Headteacher	Julie Swanston
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 December 2010
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