

# Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Bridge Road West, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2NU

## Inspection dates

12–13 October 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- A culture of high expectations and innovation permeates the school. This is driven by the inspirational headteacher. She has a compelling vision to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- This drive and ambition is shared by all leaders and staff. Senior and middle leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning.
- There is a strong learning culture within the school. All staff benefit from high-quality professional development. This ensures the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give children an outstanding start to school life. Children make excellent progress in developing their reading, writing and number skills.
- Pupils of all abilities thrive and make excellent and sustained progress across the school. By the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards is consistently above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, often better than pupils nationally. This is because of the strong teaching and learning they experience.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those starting the school at an early stage of learning English are very well supported and make good progress as a result.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are confident, courteous and polite, and show a real joy in learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely warm.
- The curriculum provides rich and memorable experiences that fire pupils' imaginations and help to develop their understanding of the world. The on-site 'forest area' is well used and helps to deepen pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. The school motto of 'learning, growing and achieving together' permeates all aspects of school life.
- The school's focus on its own values ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The governing body is skilled and highly effective. Members know the school well and provide excellent challenge and support to leaders.
- Leaders are aware that occasionally teaching and learning need further refining to ensure that pupils always make the best possible progress in lessons.

## **Full report**

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

- To raise standards even more, ensure that teachers refine their skills so that time in lessons is always well used and pupils begin learning activities quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Inspirational leadership has ensured that the school has maintained consistently high standards over time. There is a strong culture of continual improvement. Pupils learn within a happy and aspirational environment that helps them to grow into confident learners who are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The headteacher and her leadership team are forward-thinking and outward-looking. They make frequent checks on all aspects of the school, including teaching and learning. They give teachers precise feedback on how to refine their practice. All staff benefit from this strong 'learning for all' environment. They are keen to be the best they can and welcome the feedback and guidance they receive.
- Leadership at all levels is excellent and the leadership teams bring additional strength. Senior leaders nurture the talent of teachers and provide opportunities for them to develop leadership qualities. For example, the assistant headteacher began his teaching career as a newly qualified teacher in the school.
- Senior and middle leaders provide regular training and guidance for their colleagues. This contributes to the effective professional development that staff receive and helps to ensure that strong and effective teaching is sustained across the school.
- External reviews confirm that leaders' judgements of pupils' achievement are accurate. Leaders and teachers meet regularly to check on pupils' progress and set aspirational targets. Teachers use these targets to modify what and how they teach individual pupils. Other adults provide well-targeted support. Consequently, any pupil identified as not making the progress they should receives the right support to help them catch up quickly.
- The rich curriculum sparks pupils' interest so that they are excited and want to learn. As well as mathematics and English, science, art and the humanities are prominent in pupils' learning experiences. Every classroom includes inspirational and challenging displays to promote enquiry in all areas of the curriculum. Many special projects add depth to pupils' learning. For example, the school recently took part in the Hertfordshire Festival of Words. Pupils have explored the works of the abstract artist, Piet Mondrian. Their work culminated in the creation of a Mondrian-inspired façade for their new building. When learning about space, a group of pupils had the opportunity to meet the second man to walk upon the moon, Buzz Aldrin.
- Pupils also benefit from learning about how their brain works through mindfulness and yoga sessions, which help to develop their social and emotional learning skills. The school is committed to 'building children's learning power' to help them to become better independent, confident and lifelong learners. They also learn about philosophy. An outdoor classroom, 'the tree house' and a forest area further enrich and deepen learning in all areas of the curriculum. As a result of the curriculum they experience, pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is very strongly promoted.
- All members of staff and pupils model the school's values extremely well. A 'values tree' stands in the entrance corridor and specific values are explored each week. This underpins the school's work actively to promote the tolerant and responsible attitudes that prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

- Leaders have used both the pupil premium funding and the physical education and sport funding for primary schools thoughtfully. Additional adults provide high-quality support, both within and outside the classroom, to address gaps in knowledge, which quickly helps pupils to catch up. The school has greatly increased participation in sport through a range of strategies, including employing a sports apprentice. The achievement of the Sportsmark Gold Award is testament to this.
- Funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also spent wisely to secure strong progress for these pupils from their starting points.
- Parents are highly positive about the school. One comment sums up the views of many: 'I think the school is brilliant; the headteacher is amazingly enthusiastic and has all of the children's best interests at the heart in everything she does. All the teachers are fantastic: they always go the extra mile to give the children the best opportunities they possibly can.' All of those parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend the school to others.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school is highly effective. Governors are skilled, knowledgeable and completely committed. They take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Governors, along with leaders, have an aspirational vision to improve the school and have a wider impact on the local community. Members of the governing body visit the school regularly and work alongside leaders and pupils. They receive detailed information about the progress pupils are making. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development.
- Minutes from governing body meetings show that governors ask probing questions to assure themselves that the information they receive is accurate and that finances are used wisely. Governors ensure that all statutory functions are met.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority among governors and staff. Leaders ensure that there are reminders to be vigilant about safeguarding around the school.
- Site security has been improved since the previous inspection. Staff are highly professional in caring for pupils. They place the utmost priority on securing the safety and well-being of pupils. Regular training ensures that all staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the procedures they should follow. They know the different signs that might indicate that a child is at risk.
- Records of safeguarding are thorough and indicate that leaders take appropriate action in a timely manner. Leaders and office staff ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on adults working in the school. Policies, procedures and record-keeping are well organised and efficient.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Outstanding**

- Teachers and other adults ensure that all classrooms provide lively, stimulating and exciting environments in which to learn. Classroom learning is enriched by a wide

range of outdoor learning, including in the forest area or in the tree house.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. Teachers and other adults provide highly effective role models at all times.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons that help pupils take the next steps in their learning. Other adults, including teaching assistants, volunteers and apprentices support learning very well, because they are highly trained and appropriate time is provided for them to plan with teachers.
- From the Nursery onwards, children learn quickly and well because teachers make learning interesting and fun. Children respond enthusiastically to the skilful teaching they receive and develop their independent learning skills well. They enjoy working on the chosen topics. For example, Year 2 pupils, who had been reading and writing about the story of 'The three little pigs', extended their learning in the forest area where they collaborated to make suitable houses for the pigs.
- During lessons, teachers are skilled at using questioning to assess learning and provide greater challenge to pupils. Staff ensure that pupils' work builds effectively on their prior learning. Teachers and other adults intervene expertly to provide consolidation or push pupils to attempt more challenging work.
- In all classes, the promotion of speaking and listening skills is highly effective and enables pupils to develop and rehearse their ideas effectively before writing them down. Consequently, pupils' writing is of a good quality.
- Teachers inspire confidence and enjoyment in pupils' learning when they teach mathematics. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to apply their skills and understanding through problem solving and reasoning on a regular basis. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were highly engaged in a task where they had to work out how to measure each other. They applied their mathematical knowledge and understanding to this situation very well.
- Phonics is taught well across the school. Teachers and other adults are highly skilled at helping children grasp the link between letters and sounds and helping them to apply these to their reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching in all subjects is stimulating and interesting. Teachers join subjects together. For example, the 'science though stories' project developed pupils' literacy skills as well as their science skills. This also involved parents in their children's learning very effectively.
- Very occasionally, teachers do not ensure that time in lessons is well used right from the start of the lesson. When this happens, pupils are less productive than they could be.
- Teachers and other adults use a wide range of resources, including computer technology, to enhance learning and communication in the classroom. This helps pupils to build their understanding of basic concepts, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and are ably supported by other adults. Together, they match learning to specific individual needs extremely effectively. As a result of the excellent teaching they receive, all groups of pupils make rapid progress.
- Pupils' work is celebrated around the school as well as in their own classrooms. There is already a good deal of pupils' written work on display since the start of term. Excellent work is also celebrated in weekly celebration assemblies.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are extremely warm. All staff are excellent role models, embodying the school's values.
- The school is highly inclusive. It gives all pupils access to a wide range of opportunities for personal development. Pupils are put at the heart of every decision. They have a strong sense of identity and self-worth.
- The headteacher's mantra of providing 'beautiful things for beautiful people' shines through. For example, lunchtimes are delightful. Pupils sit at tables with fresh flowers and are served by adults in a highly convivial environment.
- The school's values instil a sense of determination and perseverance among pupils. This is further developed through sessions devoted to 'mindfulness' and 'building learning power'. Consequently, pupils have high aspirations and are well prepared for learning and in life.
- Pupils enjoy the range of opportunities they have to take on responsibilities, for example as play leaders and members of the eco council.
- Pupils understand about bullying and the different forms it can take. However, they say that bullying hardly ever happens. Pupils feel very safe and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. The curriculum ensures that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when working online.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are overwhelmingly polite, well mannered and friendly. Additionally, they exude a confidence which is well beyond their years.
- Pupils show care and consideration for each other when socialising at playtime, in the dining hall and when working cooperatively during lessons. They routinely hold doors open for each other and adults.
- In lessons, pupils are ready and keen to learn. They participate confidently and enthusiastically, contributing their answers willingly. They enjoy working with partners to develop their ideas and solve problems. When necessary, staff manage behaviour in class with skill and sensitivity. All pupils are very quick to give their attention to their teachers, for example responding immediately to their teacher's sounding of wind chimes.
- Leaders track and monitor behaviour thoroughly. There is a small minority of pupils who have complex needs, but their behaviour is very well managed because they are very well catered for.
- The school has effective systems for checking attendance. All absence is followed up rigorously. As a result, overall attendance has risen and is in line with the national average for all primary schools. The proportion of persistent absence is now below the most recent figures for schools nationally.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- Leaders have maintained consistently high academic standards across the school for a number of years. By the end of key stage 1, a high proportion of pupils achieve and exceed the expected standard in all subjects, when compared with the national average.
- Pupils' work and the school's assessment information show that in 2017 pupils across the school made outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the start of the year. Pupils currently in Year 2 are therefore well placed to maintain the high standards of previous cohorts.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 had been above the national average for three consecutive years to 2016. The school's most recent results for 2017 show that this high standard of achievement has been maintained.
- From their starting points at the end of the Reception Year, pupils make very good progress to the end of Year 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school, including those who are most able, make excellent progress. This is because teaching meets their needs very well. A higher proportion than is seen nationally achieved greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016. Most recent data for 2017 indicates that this is also the case this year.
- The most able make strong progress because teachers plan work that challenges them at the right level. Astute questioning by teachers and other adults provides additional challenge.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive high-quality teaching in class. This is enhanced through tailored additional support. Systems to check the progress of all pupils are highly effective. Consequently, any pupils falling behind are identified early and receive the right support to ensure that they catch up and continue to make good progress.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Children settle quickly and well into the Nursery and Reception classes. During the inspection, it was evident that they had learned new routines rapidly. Younger children in the Nursery were observed to be getting on very well, playing together and taking turns.
- The environments in both the Nursery and Reception areas are rich, well resourced and inspirational. They support and develop learning extremely well.
- The previous inspection identified that the school should provide more time for children to write in the Nursery and Reception classes. It is evident that leaders have taken this on board and their focus on writing really shines through. There are excellent opportunities for children to write often and for different purposes. Although the inspection took place early in the academic year, there was a strong emphasis on providing lots of opportunities for children to form letters and to write.

- This focus on strengthening writing has manifested itself in improved outcomes at the end of the early years. These have been above the national average for three consecutive years to 2016. The most recent data indicates that these high outcomes have been maintained in 2017. Considering that many children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills below those typically seen, this represents outstanding progress. Children are extremely confident and well prepared for Year 1.
- Early years funding for disadvantaged children is very well used. Those children from disadvantaged backgrounds make progress which is at least as good as the others. This is because staff are highly skilled at understanding and catering for their individual needs.
- Adults in the early years operate as a highly effective team. All know their roles and responsibilities. Well-designed activities, and adept interventions and questioning, make the most of opportunities for learning, including those that children choose for themselves.
- All staff use assessment information effectively. Careful ongoing observations of children's learning are recorded across the day and inform planning for future learning. These ensure that the needs of individual children are very well met.
- Children rapidly become confident and articulate, acquiring a wide range of vocabulary. They enjoy books. Phonics teaching is lively and fun and helps to give children a very secure foundation in both reading and writing.
- Leadership and management in the early years are outstanding. The early years leader has been highly effective in ensuring the very best provision for children. She has created a culture of reflection, within which all staff respond well to suggestions for improvement. Consequently, provision for children is continually enhanced.
- The school meets all welfare and safety requirements. Parents recognise that their children are happy, safe and well cared for.



## School details

Unique reference number	117323
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10023535

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	Infant and nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Akers
Headteacher	Usha Dhorajiwala
Telephone number	01438 216070
Website	<a href="http://www.woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk">www.woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk">head@woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 May 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.

- The school is a strategic partner for Acorns Teaching School Alliance and has specialist leaders of education.
- The school has achieved a number of awards. These include the Arts Mark Gold Award, the Hertfordshire Quality Standards for Early Years Gold Award, the IQM Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence, the Sportsmark Gold Award and the Primary Science Quality Award. The school is also an Eco school and has Healthy Schools status.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching across the school. This included joint observations of learning with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in pupils' books in all current classes. They also looked at work that pupils had completed during the last academic year.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their experiences of school and also spoke with them during play and lunchtimes and around the school.
- Discussions took place informally with parents when they were delivering their children to school. Inspectors took account of 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 43 electronic comments.
- Meetings were held with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a range of school leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised. This included all aspects of safeguarding, the school's information about pupils' progress, school development plans and self-evaluations. External reports were also considered.

## Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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