

Woolton Hill Junior School

Woolton Hill, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9XE

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has stabilised the school and provided clear direction for improvement. Leaders share the headteacher's vision, ambition and drive for all pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders know their school well and have taken recent action that has brought about rapid improvement. The impact of their work is very clear to see in current pupils' improved progress and outcomes.
- Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and discuss this in detail with teachers. As a result, their effective actions are enabling pupils who need to catch up to do so increasingly rapidly.
- In lessons, pupils show their determination to improve their learning. They have the confidence to tackle challenging activities that help them to learn and develop their resilience.
- Governors hold leaders firmly to account for the smooth running of the school and its continual improvement. They are suitably skilled to carry out their roles.
- Pupils enjoy lessons. They concentrate well and work hard. Teachers plan learning that meets pupils' needs successfully.
- Pupils are caring and considerate. The school offers sensitive support to enable all pupils to do their best. There is a positive atmosphere for learning and pupils value coming to school.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. The school's strong safeguarding culture is underpinned by good training and systems. Parents say that the school keeps their children safe and pupils feel safe at school.
- Leaders have designed a rich and varied curriculum. It enables pupils to learn how to keep fit, stay safe and be healthy. Pupils benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities, including through extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils develop skills and attributes that equip them well for future life in modern Britain. They thrive within the culture of equality and acceptance that is promoted well across the school.
- The recent and rapid improvement to the quality of teaching is not reflected in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2, in 2017. Current pupils are now making stronger progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure recent improvements to teaching across the school are sustained, so that:
 - pupils make consistently rapid progress throughout their time at the school
 - the proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 improves
 - a greater proportion of the most able pupils achieve the higher standards.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following a period of significant turbulence, settled leadership and stable staffing are enabling the school to improve rapidly. Senior leaders work together closely and take effective action to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development, from their careful tracking of pupils' progress and well-being. They identify appropriate priorities in their improvement plans, and have taken action to address them. In particular, leaders have improved teachers' understanding and use of assessment. This has resulted in more effective teaching, improved pupils' outcomes and accelerated progress in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders now use assessment information rigorously to drive improvements in pupils' outcomes. Regular discussions with teachers ensure that prompt action is taken when individual pupils, groups of pupils or classes are underachieving. Additional support is quickly put in place, which helps to accelerate pupils' progress. However, leaders' evaluations of the impact of this additional support are not yet quite precise enough.
- Senior leaders ensure that teachers' performance targets link well to the school's improvement priorities and to teachers' individual needs. They ensure that teachers evaluate pupils' achievements accurately and identify pupils' next steps. Consequently, senior leaders are able to respond with swift and effective action, and this is securing notable improvements to teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring activities effectively to identify and share strengths in teaching. When necessary, they promptly put in place additional support and relevant training. Teachers welcome this sharp focus on the development of their skills and learn readily from one another through the sharing of planning and ideas, as well as from training and coaching.
- Middle leaders have been successful in driving through many improvements. Their strong subject knowledge and regular monitoring enable them to target further staff training well. For example, their work on improving the regularity of assessment tasks has led to all pupils developing a greater depth of understanding and fluency in mathematics.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are ambitious for this group of pupils. The headteacher checks the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully and regularly. She acts alongside other leaders and staff to address any barriers to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders use the primary sport premium well. The quality of physical education teaching has improved and more pupils are taking part in a greater variety of sporting and physical activity. Pupils' participation in new sporting activities is celebrated.
- The wide and rich curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to further develop a range of skills. They apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects, which deepens their knowledge and understanding. For example, they work with Roman numerals in mathematics and design mosaics as part of the 'Escape from Pompeii' theme explored through English and history. Extra-curricular provision and homework ensure that pupils' interests are developed beyond the school day.

- Pupils are taught to respect those from different faiths and cultures. Their understanding of cultural similarities and differences is further developed, for example, through their links with a school in Uganda. The school has a strong ethos of caring for others and this fosters good relationships between all pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used well. The special educational needs coordinator is working with the local authority to further improve assessment and support for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very knowledgeable about the quality of education offered by the school. Their frequent visits help to keep them informed about the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. Their perceptive reports to the governing body, following these visits, ensure that all governors are well informed about the wider work of the school.
- Governors make effective use of training to develop their skills appropriately. The work of the governing body is organised carefully. This helps governors to retain a sharp focus on their core responsibilities, such as safeguarding and the impact of the school's use of additional funding for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, governors have not made sure that the school's current strategy for supporting disadvantaged pupils is on the school's website. Governors are aware and have plans to rectify this.
- The governing body has developed a thorough understanding of the information provided by leaders about how well different groups of pupils achieve. Governors ensure that the targets for teachers' performance management are linked to the school's improvement priorities. They provide helpful challenge in response to the headteacher's reports about standards in the school. This is helping the school to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher makes sure that procedures to keep pupils safe are robust. She dedicates time to her role as designated safeguarding lead in order to maintain a comprehensive overview. She has ensured that other leaders, also trained as designated safeguarding leads, are able to take on this responsibility in her absence. The school's recruitment checks for new staff and for visitors are thorough and regularly reviewed.
- All staff and governors receive regular and in-depth training, including training about the 'Prevent' duty. This enables everyone to keep their knowledge up to date and to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and the school's systems. Records of all training are regularly updated.
- Staff and visitors have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a concern about a pupil's welfare. Staff are thorough when making a referral about a child they are concerned about. The headteacher tracks carefully any referrals to ensure that

responses from external agencies are timely and appropriate.

- Safeguarding is given the highest priority by all leaders. Leaders make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online and in their locality, for example when crossing the road. Staff create a secure and safe environment, and pupils' welfare is important to everyone. This promotes a culture of safeguarding and vigilance that is evident across the school. Consequently, parents know that their children are kept safe at school, and pupils feel safe and secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching and teachers' effective use of assessment are enabling current pupils to make much better progress. Teachers plan learning that meets pupils' needs well and progressively increases levels of challenge. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the learning tasks set by their teachers. They appreciate the way staff support them in lessons, and the practical equipment that teachers provide to help them learn new concepts or consolidate their understanding.
- Teachers set pupils challenging mathematical problems involving reasoning and problem-solving. Pupils enjoy grappling with these challenges and respond well to teachers' expectations for them to work hard. Teachers also provide frequent additional opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Teachers link reading and writing skilfully to maximise the development of pupils' literacy skills. They encourage pupils to read challenging literature, and to improve the accuracy and content of their writing through frequent opportunities for extended writing. As a consequence, pupils edit their writing thoughtfully, as though they were authors, and consider the needs of their audience carefully. Teachers also include many opportunities for pupils to learn strategies that help them to understand what they are reading.
- Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their work, and reflect on what they have learned. They give helpful feedback to pupils as lessons proceed. Pupils value this feedback because they know it helps them to make more rapid progress. They see it as guiding them on their 'learning journey'. Time is used well in lessons and teachers expect pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving rapidly. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to question pupils effectively and to develop their knowledge and understanding. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding and to think of alternative responses or approaches.
- Teachers use initial assessments to drill down precisely into what pupils already know. This enables them to tackle pupils' misunderstandings and misconceptions, and to move them rapidly onto the next stage of their 'learning journey'. Pupils, including the most able, are therefore challenged appropriately to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills, and to make strong progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants take good account of the needs of each pupil in the mixed-age classes. Learning is often precisely planned, and staff are skilled at using feedback to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of additional help and interventions. They are able to develop or reinforce their understanding through personalised tasks and support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are positive about learning. In lessons, they listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Pupils speak enthusiastically about life in school and say that they are happy and enjoy learning in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' personal resilience and positive attitudes are developed well through being encouraged to persevere, 'have a go' and understand the benefits of learning through mistakes. They told inspectors that teaching staff, and sometimes other pupils, are helpful in explaining learning.
- Pupils value the responsibilities they are given. There are many ways for them to learn about the importance of working with and for the benefit of others, for example by being elected to the school council or by being chosen to be ambassadors for the school. Staff give skilful support to pupils whose behaviour can sometimes be challenging. As a result, emotionally vulnerable pupils are able to manage their own behaviour successfully.
- Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that any incidents are resolved promptly by senior leaders. Parents and staff support the view that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils are very well informed about e-safety. They confidently list the main rules that help to keep them safe when using the internet, including not showing the school's logo. They also know that they must save screen shots of any messages they are worried about so that these can be reported to an adult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well when moving around the school, during lunchtimes and playtimes, and in class. They are polite, friendly and considerate to adults and to each other.
- Pupils like coming to school. Their attendance is typically above the national average and continues to improve. Staff are rigorous in following up the reasons for any absence.
- Pupils are positive about the way behaviour is managed, and think that staff are fair. The majority of parents agree that behaviour is well managed. There has been a reduction in the number of incidents of challenging behaviour as a result of the consistency and effectiveness of the school's approach to behaviour management. Pupils are rarely excluded from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From relatively high starting points at the end of key stage 1, in recent years not all pupils have made consistently strong progress across the range of subjects.
- In 2017, the achievement of Year 6 pupils in mathematics was well below that seen nationally. This represented a decline in standards from the previous year. However, the dip in mathematics contrasted sharply with improvements in writing, and pupils' high attainment in reading.
- Leaders' urgent and effective action is improving standards and pupils' progress. The impact of their work is evident in pupils' improved outcomes in reading and writing. However, improvements in mathematics are only recently showing improvement.
- Teachers' raised expectations of what pupils can achieve, including the most able, are challenging more pupils to reach higher standards. The impact of this is evident in the school's assessment information. This shows that more pupils are currently on track to achieve a greater depth of learning, particularly in writing and mathematics. However, leaders acknowledge that currently not enough of the most able pupils attain the higher standards.
- Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books and are able to talk about the variety of texts they have read. They read with fluency and expression and demonstrate appropriate comprehension. They use their knowledge of phonics successfully to decipher unfamiliar words.
- Across the school, pupils write regularly and at length, and are supported to identify the next steps to improve their work. Year 6 pupils are able to write with increasing accuracy for a range of purposes. Their independent reading and the high-quality texts they encounter in lessons help them to use ambitious vocabulary and different language features.
- The good support and challenge for disadvantaged pupils are helping these pupils to achieve well across all subjects. The small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group are making good progress and the difference between their achievement and that of other pupils is diminishing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are also supported well. This is enabling the majority of these pupils, many of whom have below-average starting points, to make strong progress.

School details

Unique reference number	116076
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10037835

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Rhatigan
Headteacher	Yvonne Standing
Telephone number	01635 253364
Website	www.wooltonhilljunior.co.uk
Email address	adminoffice@whjs.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its strategy for the use of pupil premium on its website.
- This is an average-sized junior school. There are three mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and three mixed-age classes for Years 5 and 6.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a complete change in the governing body. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2016.
- There has been significant staff turbulence since the last inspection. The majority of leaders, teachers and support staff joined the school after the current headteacher took up post.
- A lower-than-average proportion of pupils who attend the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school's pupil population is more stable than is the case nationally.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards that set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 20 lessons. Almost all observations took place with a senior leader. Inspectors also carried out two learning walks focused on teaching, pupils' progress and the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, as they moved around the school, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. The lead inspector met with six members of the governing body, as well as the chair. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including information related to: safeguarding and attendance; funding for disadvantaged pupils; school improvement; self-evaluation and planning; and minutes of governors' meetings. They considered published information about pupils' performance for the last three years alongside leaders' records of how well pupils currently in the school are achieving. Inspectors also scrutinised a sample of pupils' English, mathematics and topic work, and listened to some Year 4 and Year 6 pupils read.
- To gather the views of pupils, inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons, at lunchtime and breaktime. They also had a meeting with a group of pupils.
- In addition to speaking to parents at the start of each day, inspectors considered 101 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 64 free-text comments. They considered 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 85 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Johns, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Barney Geen	Ofsted Inspector

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