

Inspection of Woolenwick Junior School

Bridge Road West, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2NU

Inspection dates: 12–13 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

After a period of substantial staff changes, pupils are now benefiting from the improvements made at the school. There are many improvements still needed. Expectations for pupils are too low and work is too easy for pupils. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

An area of strength for the school is the approach pupils take towards each other and school. Pupils enjoy school and learning. They have strong relationships with staff. Pupils work hard to learn well and take pride in their achievements. Pupils play well together in the playground. They told us that pupils are kind and care for each other. Adults help pupils resolve issues well when disagreements arise. Pupils told us that when bullying occurs staff deal with it effectively and it does not continue.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Curriculum planning is well developed in some subjects but not for all. In curriculum areas that have complete plans in place, leaders have clarified what pupils need to know and be able to do.

Teachers do not consistently meet the needs of their pupils. In reading, for example, books do not always match pupils' reading abilities or interests. As a result, pupils who find reading difficult do not gain confidence or improve their reading well enough. Teachers also do not catch and correct pupils when they have not understood what they are trying to learn.

The curriculum has a clear focus on ensuring that pupils use sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils told us that they use the classroom displays with key words when writing. We saw teachers consistently requiring pupils to use more mature language when speaking and writing. However, teachers do not effectively develop pupils' abilities to spell accurately.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities take part in learning and gain independence. Teachers usually provide appropriate support to enable these pupils to overcome their challenges.

Leaders have not planned the opportunities for pupils' personal development well enough. While there is an enrichment programme in place, many pupils do not take part because they are not aware of the opportunities available. Pupils have not had many opportunities to represent their school in competitive sport. This is because leaders have only recently planned the calendar of events. Similarly, opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are disjointed. Pupils have too few opportunities to learn about fundamental British values.

The governing body has gone through a period of change, including the appointment of new governors. They have high ambitions for pupils and have

started to challenge school leaders about the quality of education they provide. Governors recognise staff concerns that senior leaders' plans are too complex and are too often left unfinished. The local authority provides helpful support for governors to plan and implement improvements. The local authority has also provided useful training for new leaders to carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and up-to-date in their knowledge of safeguarding risks and practices. Staff are on the look-out for signs of potential harm. They act swiftly and appropriately when concerns arise.

Leaders work closely with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support they need.

Leaders ensure the necessary checks are undertaken for any adults seeking to work with pupils at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet finished the planning of the curriculum for all subjects. As a result, teachers do not focus activities consistently on what pupils should know and be able to do. Leaders must ensure that curriculum plans for all subjects clarify what pupils need to know and do.
- Leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn are too low. These low expectations limit what some pupils can achieve. Leaders must ensure that curriculum plans reflect higher expectations. Leaders must also ensure that teachers cater for the needs of all pupils, regardless of their abilities.
- Teachers do not always know when pupils do not understand what they are trying to learn. As a result, teachers do not correct pupils effectively when they misunderstand something. Leaders need to ensure that teachers assess pupils' understanding with greater precision and correct any misunderstanding.
- Senior leaders have created overly complicated development plans. Too many of the expected activities have not been completed. Leaders need to prioritise exactly what needs to happen to make the necessary improvements. Governors need to ensure that leaders make these improvements.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	117322
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10121355
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Getrude Acheampong
Headteacher	Gary Hawkins
Website	www.woolenwickjm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There are many new staff and leaders since the previous inspection. Over half of the staff joined the school after the previous inspection. Apart from the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team are also new to their roles. Four new governors joined the governing body in February 2020 and the new chair of the governing body took up her post in January 2020.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We had discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and curriculum leaders. We also had discussions with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- We analysed 44 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 41 written responses from parents.

- We spoke with teachers, including newly qualified teachers, support staff and pupils. We analysed 21 responses to Ofsted’s questionnaire for staff.
- We took account of a wide range of information, including the school website, development plans, information about pupils’ needs and leaders’ records about pupils’ behaviour. We reviewed documentation regarding safeguarding.
- We visited lessons across the school and carried out a scrutiny of pupils’ books. We started the inspection with a focus on reading, mathematics, writing, science and geography. To answer questions raised on the first day of the inspection, we visited lessons in other subjects on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Simon Eardley

Ofsted Inspector

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