

# Inspection of a good school: Warden Hill Junior School

Birdsfoot Lane, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2DN

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 June 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy attending Warden Hill Juniors. They like being with their friends during breaktimes. There are lots of fun things to do. Pupils work hard in lessons. They are proud of their work, which is typically well presented and neat.

Pupils meet leaders' high expectations for behaviour throughout the school day. They move around the school safely and considerately. Pupils know about the fundamental British values. A typical comment from a pupil was, 'Values keep the community together. I respect you; you respect me.' Most pupils say that bullying is not an issue in the school. They say that if it happens, staff quickly stop it. Most pupils say they feel safe at school.

Pupils welcome a variety of opportunities to take on responsibilities. They feel they have a voice through school council, such as suggesting changes to the school menu. Pupils are enthused by a wide range of school activities. For example, Year 4 pupils love the chance to link with pupils in a local school.

Despite these strengths, pupils do not receive a consistently strong education across every subject, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Some pupils who need more help with reading are not given effective enough support.

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

The new leadership team is working with staff to make important changes to the school's curriculum. Leaders' actions have already had a positive impact in a few subjects, such as mathematics. In these subjects, teachers break down learning into well-sequenced, small steps to ensure that pupils secure important knowledge well. This ensures that pupils make rapid progress. However, in other subjects, the curriculum does not deliver a precise

enough sequence of knowledge from Year 3 to Year 6. In these subjects, although pupils take part in interesting lessons, they do not consistently retain important knowledge in enough depth over time.

Leaders have recently taken effective action to improve teachers' subject knowledge and use of assessment. However, teachers do not consistently explain new learning clearly enough. They do not spot pupils' misconceptions in lessons precisely enough, meaning that pupils do not receive the help they need promptly enough.

Leaders are keen to promote a love of reading. They have introduced a new curriculum to help pupils understand increasingly complex texts. Many pupils achieve highly. However, some pupils lack the phonics knowledge they need to read fluently. To address this, the school is introducing a new phonics programme. It is in its early stages and is not yet having the impact leaders intend.

Leaders ensure that the individual needs of pupils with SEND are clearly identified and the appropriate targets set. Due to recent training, teachers are becoming better at adapting learning activities to help pupils with SEND access lessons. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

Despite the weaknesses in planning, pupils enjoy the activities that teachers provide. Teachers ensure that lessons are calm so that pupils can get on with their work uninterrupted. Almost all pupils behave well in lessons.

Provision for pupils' wider development is a strength. Pupils learn about how to be healthy and safe. All pupils learn to play musical instruments, such as the violin, and regularly perform for parents. There are many trips and visits, including outdoor pursuits. Leaders ensure pupils receive many opportunities to become good citizens. For example, they encourage pupils to take on leadership responsibilities such as prefect or school councillor.

Staff share a determination to do the very best for pupils. Staff feel valued by leaders and feel that their voices are heard. Most feel that leaders are considerate of staff workload.

The new leadership team has clearly identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Leaders and governors are in the process of implementing effective improvement plans. They are making good use of advice from local authority advisers. However, some improvement plans are at an early stage of implementation.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. They are clear about the procedures to follow when they are concerned about a pupil. They report any concerns swiftly. Leaders ensure that any issues are recorded correctly and promptly followed up. They work with external agencies where

needed to make sure the right actions are taken. They repeatedly check that pupils are getting the help they need.

Leaders make thorough checks when recruiting new staff and volunteers. In lessons pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both online and offline.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not identify a precise enough sequence of learning from Year 3 to Year 6. This means that their learning does not build well enough over time, or in enough depth. Leaders need to ensure that important knowledge is broken down into well-sequenced steps so that teachers deliver the curriculum, and check pupils' learning with precision.
- Some pupils lack the phonics knowledge they need to read fluently. This hampers them from accessing increasingly complex texts across the curriculum. The school should urgently fulfil its plans to introduce a systematic phonics programme, including school-wide training, so that pupils catch up rapidly in their reading.
- Teachers are not yet consistently proficient at adapting learning activities in lessons for pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND are not able to access some lessons as well as they should. Leaders should provide further training for teachers to help them adapt learning activities across all subjects so all pupils make good progress.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109562
<b>Local authority</b>	Luton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10284263
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	456
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Emily Chambers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Lightfoot
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wardenhilljuniors.co.uk">www.wardenhilljuniors.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There is a before- and after-school club on site for Warden Hill Infant and Junior Schools. This is run by the Warden Hill Junior School.
- The school uses one alternative provider.
- A new headteacher took up post in April 2023.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held discussions with five governors, including the chair. A separate discussion was held with a school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited a sample of lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector reviewed pupils' work in a further range of subjects, including English and history.
- The inspector met with pupils to understand their views about the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the special educational needs coordinator and carried out lesson visits together with leaders to consider the support for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits, around the school and in the playground. The inspector looked at behaviour, bullying and attendance records, and leaders' analysis of these.
- The inspector reviewed school documentation, including school development plans and governing body minutes.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised by the inspector, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, and the school's log of safeguarding incidents. A meeting was held with a designated safeguarding leader.
- The inspector considered 52 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 39 free-text comments. The inspector spoke to parents and carers as they dropped off their children at school. The inspector also considered 262 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 46 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Judith Sumner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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