

Inspection of Woolenwick Junior School

Bridge Road West, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2NU

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils access a range of learning and life experiences at this school. Pupils enjoy their studies. They know that adults help them and are keen for them to succeed academically and socially. Pupils become fluent readers and gain mathematical understanding. When they need additional help, pupils are well supported. Consequently, results in national tests are improving.

There are many opportunities for pupils to get involved in school life. Pupils take up leadership positions, such as training to be peer mentors, standing for the pupil parliament or serving as a house captain. Parents and pupils appreciate the variety of clubs on offer. Pupils are particularly proud of the trampolining club. There is a high take up of clubs and wider opportunities, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils value and benefit from the residential trips designed to build their independence, resilience and social skills. Pupils trust adults to advise them with any concerns they have. Pupils get on well together most of the time. If there are friendship fallouts, pupils know adults will support them to sort these out quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe here.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has put in place a fully developed curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Across all subjects, staff are clear about what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. Teachers know pupils' needs and use advice of external specialists to support pupils with SEND. The curriculum is appropriately adapted for these pupils.

Leaders are knowledgeable about their subject areas. They provide staff with clear guidance about the most effective teaching methods. This is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. However, there is still some work needed to ensure that all staff deliver the curriculum as well as leaders intend. In addition, the feedback teachers give occasionally is not clear enough for pupils to know exactly how to improve or extend their thinking further. This means some pupils do not grasp some aspects of the curriculum as well as they could.

The school ensures pupils catch up quickly when they find something tricky to learn. This is especially true in reading. The school provides intensive support to ensure pupils are fluent and confident readers. Well-trained adults are swift to spot and rectify when pupils struggle to recall letter sounds. All pupils have reading books matched accurately to their reading ability. Pupils get regular reading practise using high-quality texts.

The school regularly checks if pupils remember what has been taught. Where these checks are used well, teachers swiftly fill gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in

some areas of the curriculum where these checks are still being developed, staff are not always sufficiently rigorous in ensuring pupils remember or apply new learning.

Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils know the school rules. They generally play happily together at breaktimes. Leaders are working to simplify the school's behaviour policy to make it easier for staff to apply it consistently. Pupils attend school regularly.

All pupils are taught to respect differences. They work towards national accreditations about equality to prepare them for adult life among people with different beliefs and lifestyles. Most pupils show maturity in discussing social issues, yet a few still need to demonstrate a more understanding attitude to some fundamental British values. Pupils know the latest updates on how to stay safe, including online. Pupils are also taught about healthy living and mental well-being.

Staff are very positive about working at this school. They welcome the updates to the curriculum. Staff feel well supported by all leaders.

Governors bring a high level of expertise to their role. They ask challenging questions, yet also ensure leaders are well supported. Governors are determined the school continues to improve and have a clear strategic plan. They fulfil all their statutory duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some feedback given to pupils about how to improve their work is not always precise enough. This means that some pupils do not always understand how to improve their work to meet curriculum expectations. Teachers need to ensure that they provide consistently clear feedback, so that pupils know exactly how they can improve and extend their learning.
- A few staff do not deliver elements of the curriculum as confidently and competently as others. This hinders how well some pupils learn. Leaders need to provide the necessary training, so that all staff are confident in the most effective ways to teach the curriculum.
- Checks on pupils learning of some areas of the curriculum are still embedding. Staff are not always fully aware of what pupils misunderstand or have forgotten. Staff need to check more robustly that pupils can remember and apply the knowledge taught.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117322
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10294977
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	235
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Wayne Hanson-Prince
Headteacher	Richard Pallant
Website	www.woolenwickjm.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school runs its own before- and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school previously had two Ofsted monitoring visits in February 2021 and May 2021.
- The current headteacher took up his post in April 2021.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, senior leaders, subject leaders, family liaison worker, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector also met the local authority's school improvement advisor and reviewed notes of visits from the local authority.
- The lead inspector had a meeting with five governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also looked at other subject curriculum plans and pupils' work from intervention groups.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governor minutes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, which included 45 free-text comments. There were 18 responses to the staff survey. No pupils answered the pupil survey. However, the inspectors spoke to several pupils from different year groups during the inspection, as well as a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Laura Hewer

Ofsted Inspector

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