

Inspection of a good school: Woolston Infant School

Florence Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 9DB

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Outcome

Woolston Infant School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Simon Arthur. This school is part of Hamwic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Robert Farmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Alice Wrighton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Woolston Infant School is a happy place. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They form positive, warm relationships with each other and adults as they learn and play. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in class is very good. Pupils appreciate the regular praise they receive for working hard.

The school is proud to be part of the local community. Children in the early years regularly walk to the local river, library and high street. Older pupils loved visiting the SeaCity museum to learn about the people from Southampton who worked on the Titanic. Parents and carers volunteer to talk in assembly about the interesting jobs they do. During the inspection, the atmosphere was joyful as the school hall filled up with parents reading stories with their children, as part of the World Book Day celebrations.

Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to others' nationally. There have been some recent improvements, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and in pupils' reading. Pupils' knowledge in other subjects is becoming more secure too. Rightly, the school is focusing on raising achievement across the curriculum still further, especially in mathematics.

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

The school has begun a process of redesigning the whole curriculum. Last year, all staff were trained in a new phonics programme. Leaders' ongoing monitoring and mentoring means that the school's approach to teaching phonics is well embedded. Pupils practise by reading books that match the phonics sounds they know. Most pupils quickly become accurate and speedy readers. Where some pupils need extra help, adults make sure they get additional practice.

Pupils develop a love of reading right from the early years. Staff have identified the high-quality stories and poems that they know children will love. During the inspection, children enjoyed 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt', joining in with the words and actions as they went around the school.

This year, the school is improving mathematics. The curriculum has been resequenced. Pupils have more opportunity to revisit key concepts and practise what they have learned. Staff check much more regularly what pupils have and have not learned, and adapt what they teach next as a result. As a result, pupils are more confident in their calculations and experience more success. Leaders plan further refinements to make sure that pupils master mathematical concepts and improve their reasoning skills.

The trust has supported the school to make sure there are high-quality curriculums in place across all subjects. These help teachers to make sure that pupils gain knowledge in a systematic way from the start of the early years through to the end of Year 2. Staff feel well supported by school and trust leaders as they adapt and refine the curriculum to meet the ethos of the school. Already, pupils' knowledge of subjects such as art and history is stronger than it has been in the past. In part, this is also because teaching is more organised than in the past, with a sharper approach to checking and reviewing what pupils have learned.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved provision for pupils with SEND. Staff are well trained to be able to identify pupils' needs and provide timely support and help. Staff are ambitious for the achievement of pupils with SEND. They are knowledgeable about how to adapt the curriculum to help pupils with SEND learn. Leaders make sure that the right processes are followed to get additional help from expert professionals where this is needed. Because of this, pupils with SEND settle in well and are achieving more than in the past.

Last year, pupils' attendance was a concern for the school. However, leaders have worked very effectively to identify and tackle the reasons for pupils' intermittent absence. They have promoted the importance of regular attendance in school. As a result, term-time holidays have declined significantly and most pupils attend very regularly.

The school prioritises pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about the different festivals celebrated by people of different faiths in the local community. There are lots of opportunities to sing together and to learn a musical instrument. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in the local area, especially near water and railways. The school regularly welcomes visitors into the school, such as a theatre company that helped pupils to learn about the Great Fire of London, and a professional storyteller who had pupils' full attention as she told them stories during the World Book Day assembly. All this supports pupils' growing knowledge about life in modern Britain and contributes to the school being a caring, happy community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, the curriculum is being revised because it was previously not well sequenced and pupils did not retain their knowledge of mathematics well enough. As a result, pupils' learning was disjointed and their outcomes in mathematics have not been as strong as they should be. The school should continue to review and refine the curriculum in mathematics to ensure that pupils gain and retain the important mathematical knowledge they need.
- Improvements to the curriculum in some foundation subjects are further ahead than in others. As a result, pupils' knowledge in some subjects is not as deep as it is in others. The school needs to review and refine the curriculum in some subjects to ensure that pupils have the same depth of knowledge in all subjects.

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 predecessor school, also named Woolston Infant School, to be good in 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](#)' 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	148113
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10296467
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Alice Wrighton
Headteacher	Simon Arthur
Website	www.woolstoninfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Hamwic Education Trust in April 2021.
- The headteacher was previously deputy headteacher at the school. He became acting headteacher in September 2022 on the retirement of the previous headteacher. He took on the substantive role in April 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club and an after-school club on the school site for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.

- The inspector met with the chair of Hamwic Education Trust and two directors of education from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to some pupils reading to school staff.
- The inspector also discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects, including history, geography, music, computing and writing.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. She spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector spoke with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector visited the parents' coffee morning that the school held for World Book Day. She also considered the views expressed via Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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