

# Inspection of a good school: Wootton Lower School

Bedford Road, Wootton, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 9JT

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Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

## **Outcome**

Wootton Lower School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils flourish at Wootton Lower School. They come to school happy to be part of the school community. Pupils build positive relationships with one another. Caring staff know the pupils very well. This means that pupils trust adults to help them resolve any problems quickly and to keep them safe.

The school has high expectations and ambition for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils, including those in early years, display commendable attitudes to learning. They behave well and follow the clear and simple school rules of 'be kind, be safe, be ready'. This helps them fulfil the school aims of 'believe, achieve, thrive'.

Pupils take part in a wide range of enrichment activities that support their learning and build confidence beyond the curriculum. Carefully chosen visits enhance the taught curriculum well. Local walks and use of local amenities, such as the library, help to develop pupils' sense of the community. The school encourages pupils to develop leadership responsibilities. These include school council representatives, eco-champions, library heroes and play leaders. School council members are proud of their role in helping to raise money for those that are less fortunate than themselves.

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

The school's curriculum is well thought out. It builds knowledge, skills and vocabulary in a logical order. This helps pupils to remember the important information identified in curriculum plans. The careful thinking and planning begins in early years. This provides children with a good start to their education and supports their transition into key stage 1.

The school places a high value on providing quality professional development to staff. This helps to ensure that they are highly skilled in delivering the curriculum. Staff have strong subject knowledge and consistently provide well-thought-out learning activities. This helps pupils to learn what they need for the next steps in their learning.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know. In the vast majority of curriculum areas, teachers identify gaps in learning and address these quickly. However, there are occasions when this practise is not always as consistent as it could be. When this happens it results in a small number of pupils not remembering the important information as well as they might. While this is the case, generally pupils' work is of a high quality and pupils achieve well.

From the start of Reception, staff ensure that children develop the skills they need to become fluent readers. The school provides workshops for parents to support pupils' reading at home. This is enhanced through a reading newsletter, which promotes the importance of reading. It encourages a shared love of reading. The school's effective approach to reading forms part of pupils' daily diet. Books are carefully selected to ensure that all pupils are able to see themselves in stories, whatever their background. Expert phonics teaching helps to identify pupils who are struggling to keep up. Through timely and effective help, these pupils quickly build their knowledge of and confidence in reading.

The school supports pupils with SEND very well. Staff quickly identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They work closely with outside agencies and parents to put the right support in place for individual pupils. Staff adapt their teaching and use appropriate resources to ensure that pupils are able to successfully access the same curriculum as their peers. This helps them to flourish and achieve well.

Pupils understand the schools' expectations through the explicit teaching of strong routines from the start of early years. Pupils across the school look after each other at social times and engage with their learning. Occasionally, a very small number of pupils lose focus in lessons. While this is generally addressed quickly by adults, this is not consistently the case.

Pupils' wider development is of high quality. The school ensures that pupils understand significant issues, such as how to stay safe and democracy. Enrichment activities broaden all pupils' interests. Along with a range of clubs and visitors to school, they participate in 'Friday enrichment'. Pupils talk enthusiastically about working on projects each half term in one of six core areas and collecting a stamp in their 'pupil passport' to demonstrate their achievements. Pupils expressed their excitement about the ongoing school chess tournament, which one pupil organised.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support they get to manage their workload.

The governing body provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. This contributes well to decisions made about school improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- There are some minor inconsistencies in how teachers implement the curriculum. As a result, a very small number of pupils do not always recall important knowledge as securely as they should. Through continued sharing of best practice, the school needs to ensure that all teachers deliver all aspects of the curriculum consistently well so that all pupils know and remember the knowledge that they need.

## 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 October 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109494
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294916
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	626
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Co-chairs of governing body</b>	Paul Woodman and Luke Williams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Tavener
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woottonlowerschool.org">www.woottonlowerschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a split-site school. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are based at the Harris Way site in Wootton. Year 3 and 4 pupils are based at the Bedford Road site.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

## 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.

- 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 looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school and observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- Inspectors discussed with the school its provision for early years, pupils' personal development, behaviour and for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector met remotely with one of the co-chairs of the governing body and the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered 161 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including 51 free-text comments. He also considered the 71 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 26 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Wayne Jarvis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Jones

Ofsted Inspector

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