

Woolton Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116076
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290412
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Pritiben Patel

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nigel Bates
Headteacher	Mr David Gent
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2001
School address	Woolton Hill Newbury RG20 9XE
Telephone number	01635 253364
Fax number	01635 255144

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2007
Inspection number	290412

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woolton Hill is a small junior school. The majority of pupils are of White British origin with a small percentage of pupils from other White backgrounds. The majority of pupils come from affluent backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below the national average. In recent years, the headteacher has had an extended period of absence, and there has been a high turnover of staff.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Woolton Hill is a satisfactory and improving school. Most parents are happy with the school, and it is well regarded by the community. However, some parents have raised concerns about pupils' progress, challenge for more able pupils as well as the inexperience of staff. There has been a decline in pupils' progress as a result of the absence of the headteacher and the changeover in teaching staff. The school has recognised that pupils' achievement must improve in order to raise standards and has begun to take effective action. For example, work on improving approaches to extended writing has helped to lift progress in English. This demonstrates that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject managers, many of whom are new to the post, do not yet have enough expertise in leadership and therefore are not having enough impact on pupils' learning. Recently, the local authority has provided a good level of support, and strategies to improve achievement are bearing fruit. For example, as well as improved progress in English, pupils are now making satisfactory progress in mathematics due to a strong focus placed on the development of their skills in solving problems. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weakness, play an active role in self-evaluation and make a satisfactory contribution to its development.

Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with attainment that is above average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been significantly above average in all areas. However, since 2005 there has been a significant decline in pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and standards are just above average.

Staff and governors place a strong emphasis on the personal development of pupils and consequently their personal skills are good. Pupils enjoy their education and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils have a good understanding about safe practices and healthy lifestyles and make a good contribution to the school.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory overall. Care and support are strengths, but academic guidance is satisfactory. Effective support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, allowing them to make satisfactory progress. The school has good links with external agencies, such as the educational psychologist, in order to help meet pupils' individual needs. However, the tracking of pupils' progress and individual target-setting is at the early stages of development.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Almost all teachers are at the early stages of their careers and consequently are still developing their skills. More able pupils sometimes find the work set too easy and are not sufficiently challenged in all lessons. There is not enough consistently good teaching in order to ensure pupils make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. Extra curricular provision is a strength as pupils participate in a wide range of sports and clubs. The curriculum provides satisfactorily for the development of pupils' basic skills.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics. In particular, ensure that more able pupils are given more challenging work to do.
- Improve teaching and learning so that there is more good teaching.
- Develop the role and accountabilities of subject managers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Standards are above average overall. Until 2005 standards in science, English and mathematics were well above the national average. Since then standards in English and mathematics have declined to just above average although high standards in science have been maintained. The large percentage of pupils with learning difficulties in Year 6 in 2006 was one of the factors contributing to this decline. The school, with the support of the local authority and external advisers, has introduced measures to improve the quality of pupils' extended writing and the application of their skills to problems in mathematics. Consequently pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, there is still some way to go.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good. Pupils relate well to one another and behave well. The good attendance reflects their positive attitudes. Bullying is rare and one pupil explained, 'If it does happen then it's always quickly dealt with.'

Pupils respond well to the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and are proud to discuss how they raise funds to provide water supply for the Ugandan village of Mityania. They take full advantage of the many opportunities to take part in a variety of sports and talk confidently about the importance of a healthy life style. Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and are consulted, through both the school and class councils, on how the school and its grounds can be further improved. Pupils' are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education because of their satisfactory achievement in basic skills allied to their positive attitudes to learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The majority of teachers are relatively inexperienced and have not yet had the opportunity to learn from either observing or working alongside more experienced colleagues. There is not yet enough good teaching. Pupils are given good quality help by learning support assistants. They cooperate well and respond eagerly to the tasks set. However too many lessons proceed at a slow pace and pupils spend too long listening and responding to directed activities. This means that they have too few opportunities to exercise initiative. Teachers' questioning often does not encourage pupils to reflect, explain, and justify what they are doing, and consequently opportunities to consolidate understanding are often lost. Marking informs learning well in Years 5 and 6 but is inconsistent overall. Pupils with

learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported, but more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in all lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with good features. Themed weeks such as 'Sports Week' and 'Maths investigation week' help pupils to make links between subjects and provide them with the opportunity to use and apply their skills in different contexts. Extra curricular provision is strong, particularly in sports, and impacts positively on pupils' personal development and enjoyment. Parents agree, for example they stated, 'We are impressed with the wide range of extra curricular activities such as music lessons and sports clubs.' Pupils participate in a variety of sports and clubs such as Gaelic football, gym, samba and French. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are developed satisfactorily in different subjects. For example, interesting history work about Ancient Egypt was presented using various computer programmes. Pupils' basic skills are now being developed satisfactorily in English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Care and support are strengths. Staff put the best interests of pupils first in all that they do and the school works well with parents and other organisations to meet their needs. The school has good links with both the infant and secondary schools to facilitate smooth transition. The school is beginning to use assessment information effectively to identify and address the progress of those pupils that are not achieving as they should. Pupil progress meetings, recently introduced, are also contributing effectively to this process. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have recently been implemented, but are not fully embedded. Not all pupils are aware of their individual curricular targets and how to achieve them. The school ensures that pupils learn in a safe environment by conducting regular site inspections and risk assessments of school activities as well as ensuring that procedures for safeguarding learners are fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The impact of managers is demonstrated in pupils' satisfactory achievement. Teaching and learning are improving, assessment is becoming more rigorous and systematic tracking has been introduced. All of these initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Managers at all levels share the same vision and recognise that pupils must do better in English and mathematics. However, subject managers are new to the post and currently lack the expertise to make enough impact on pupils' progress to move it from satisfactory to good. They are beginning to provide direction for further improvements. For example, the work of the English and mathematics managers is now having a positive effect on achievement in these subjects. Self evaluation is satisfactory. Challenging and accurate targets are set based on a developing overview of pupils' progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woolton Hill Junior School, Woolton Hill, Newbury, RG20 9XE

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for being helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school. These are the main things we found.

- You get on well with each other, behave well and have good relationships with your teachers.
- You make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics because you have satisfactory teaching in your school.
- You have good levels of attendance and enjoy school because of the wide range of activities the school offers.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after.
- The headteacher, governors and staff work hard on your behalf.

We believe that there are things that can be improved further such as the standard of your work in English and mathematics. You should have more good lessons and for those of you who find your work easy, we believe that you should be given work that really makes you think, particularly in English and mathematics. Finally, we think that your subject leaders need to have more help so that they can become even better in their jobs.

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel Lead inspector