

Woodlands Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102834
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	308133
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bunmi Shodeyi
Headteacher	Ms Dee Heffer
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2002
School address	Loxford Lane Ilford IG1 2PJ
Telephone number	020 8478 4612
Fax number	020 8514 4783

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average junior school in a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. About half of the pupils have an Asian heritage, with the rest coming from a range of cultural backgrounds. There is a significant percentage of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The number of refugees and asylum seekers is higher than normally seen. In recent years the school has grown from two to four forms of entry and has had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, but is now a stable learning community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that places much emphasis on pupils' well-being; consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and agree that they all get along together well and like learning about each other's cultures. Parents agree and are generally supportive of its work. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and value the beliefs and customs of other groups within the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The team has been most successful in improving attendance and retaining staff after a time of growth and change. They have a realistic and largely accurate view of their work, but have not been rigorous enough in evaluating each initiative that has been undertaken to determine which is most successful at raising standards. Teachers have undertaken a wide variety of strategies learnt from professional development without fully considering the impact these are having on pupils' learning. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory they vary in quality between classes and across year groups. What is found to be a strength of some lessons is a weakness in others. For example, learning objectives are very clear in some instances and pupils know what they are going to learn. In some others, however, they are confusing, not written in language that all pupils can understand and activities do not directly relate to the purpose of the lesson. As a result standards are below average. Although pupils' achievement from their starting points is satisfactory, it is uneven across the school because of the inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress and are supported well. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive good support so that they can make satisfactory progress in learning English. Pupils who are new to the country or who have moved from another school report that they are made to feel welcome and that the school is very friendly.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about the excellent range of extra activities that are provided for them. They speak very highly of all the trips that enrich learning and the visitors that come in to school to help them. However, whilst the curriculum is satisfactory, there are occasions when lessons are too long and some activities are not relevant to particular groups of pupils. This is because teachers do not always make accurate assessments of what pupils know and can do. Consequently some work is too difficult and some too easy. Care, guidance and support, are satisfactory although pastoral care is good. Pupils have targets for improving their work and know what these are. Marking is satisfactory and usually gives pupils ideas for how to improve their work.

The leadership team demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further. They acknowledge the uneven nature of the progress that pupils make and the need to be more rigorous in the evaluation of their work and have the wherewithal to secure the necessary improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching to provide a consistent approach to the planning of lessons so that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn.
- Improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments and the way they are used to plan lessons.
- Ensure that there is a more rigorous evaluation of the work of the school.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

National test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 show that standards overall are below average because the number of pupils who reach the higher levels are lower than normally seen. In 2006, pupils made good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing. In mathematics, standards were below average because too many pupils did not reach the standards that could have been expected. However, the school recognised this and put in strategies to ensure that pupils now make better progress in mathematics. As a result pupils of all backgrounds now make satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics, whilst progress in reading remains good and, overall, this represents satisfactory achievement. The school has set challenging targets for next year and on course to reach them because many effective strategies are ensuring that pupils' progress is steady.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are strengths of the school. Pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons particularly when activities are practical, such as in art and drama. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development supports pupils' good personal development. They are keen to learn about and celebrate each other's cultures and a different country is a monthly focus of the curriculum, enabling an increasing understanding of the world and its people. Pupils praise their school, are friendly, kind and cooperate well in their work and play. They know how to seek help to stay safe and respond willingly when given monitor's responsibilities. School councillors are proud they have bought mirrors and litter bins from their budget to improve the facilities. Playground buddies feel they 'make others happy when they have no one to play with' and are valued in their role. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school rules and a zero tolerance of bullying is firmly embedded in their moral and social values. The importance of healthy eating and lifestyle is a high priority and pupils are very aware of foods to avoid and the need for exercise. Attendance and punctuality have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory and ensure that pupils make satisfactory progress, there are some inconsistencies across the school. In some lessons pupils make good progress because good use is made of resources so that pupils are keen to learn and are eager to work together. In a few instances, this is not the case and pupils sit and listen to their teachers for too long and, therefore, their progress slows. Sometimes tasks and activities do not directly relate to the stated purpose of the lesson and pupils are not sure what they are meant to be learning. The quality of teachers' assessments also varies. In a few classes they are not accurate enough and work is not planned to take account of what pupils already know and understand.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides an excellent range of enrichment activities. This plays a strong part in promoting the good personal development of pupils. Activities include regular visits to places of interest and a wide range of visitors to the school, who share their expertise with the pupils. For instance, visits from touring theatre companies help raise pupils' awareness of how to keep safe and the benefit of healthy lifestyles. There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' creativity, and this has been recognised through the Artsmark gold award.

The core curriculum provided is satisfactory. Its strength lies in the opportunities provided for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening. However, planning does not always meet the needs of pupils well enough. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are planned satisfactorily. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects has improved recently as there are good quality resources and pupils have regular access to the computer suite.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' pastoral care is good and a strength of the school. The staff make positive relationships with pupils and show good concern for their welfare, health and safety. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Most pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve as teachers set targets and mark work regularly. However, this practice is variable between classes and year groups. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities have their needs thoroughly assessed and receive good support enabling them to make satisfactory progress. Refugee pupils have a good induction programme that helps them to settle quickly. Pupils are actively encouraged to evaluate their learning at the end of lessons and this impacts positively on their good personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders, well supported by staff, have been successful in creating a good climate for learning throughout the school. They have ensured that the promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being is at the forefront of the school's development. Most notable is the work that has been carried out to create a racially harmonious school where all pupils get along together and want to learn about other cultures and beliefs. The senior management has promoted good teamwork among staff through the creation of three leadership teams, each with a different focus. These teams have been successful in developing initiatives such as 'memorable learning' and pupils' creativity, but in each team there are weaknesses in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. Among senior managers, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning sometimes places too much emphasis on the teaching techniques seen rather than their impact on pupils' learning. Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to and supportive of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

27 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Junior School, Ilford, IG1 2PJ

Thank you very much for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited you a few days ago. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school. I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that yours is a satisfactory school with some good parts. Most of you make satisfactory progress in your work. You make good progress in reading where you have all worked very hard. We were most impressed by the fact that you all get along so well and are keen to learn about each other's cultures and beliefs. I enjoyed coming into the Year 5 and 6 assembly and hearing you sing. I thought that those who performed for us were really brave and I wish you well in your future performances. Your behaviour is good and your head teacher told us that you have all worked hard at improving this. You are very good at coming to school and being on time. That is very important if you are to make good progress.

We think that your teachers take good care of you. We have asked them to make sure that you are clear about what you are expected to learn in lessons. We have asked your teachers to check that you understand what you are learning so that you can make better progress. We have also asked your headteacher to look at all the new things you are trying in school so that you can all decide which is the best for making you learn more.

Once again thank you for helping us find out about your work. I wish you all good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead Inspector