

Westwood Farm Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109845
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	310121
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	John Collins

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger King
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Jones
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2003
School address	Fullbrook Crescent Tilehurst Reading RG31 6RY
Telephone number	0118 942 5182
Fax number	0118 945 4498

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized junior school has a hearing-impaired resources unit that currently caters for six children. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, those from minority ethnic groups and those pupils whose first language is not English, are well-below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average, although that of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above average. Attainment on entry is broadly average but fluctuates from year to year. Approximately two-thirds of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school providing a good education. More than one parent wrote about how happy they are with the school, a sentiment echoed in the words of their children, who say how much they enjoy coming to school. One parent described it as 'all round excellence!' A particular feature of the school is the very good inclusion of pupils from the hearing impaired unit in the everyday life of the school.

The school has a good capacity to improve because of good leadership and management that has a clear focus on raising standards and achievement. The school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the last inspection by substantially raising standards in science. Whilst governors are supportive of the school, they could develop further their role in holding the school to account by questioning and challenging its future plans for development.

The latest 2007 test and assessment data shows that the school has successfully raised standards after the previous dip in 2006. Standards are now above average and pupils are achieving well. Consistently good teaching and good use of assessment data have contributed to this. As the school can now more closely monitor pupils' progress, any underachievement can be quickly identified and appropriate support provided. However, in some lessons planned opportunities for writing are not always challenging enough, particularly for pupils of lower ability.

Pupils respond to the high expectations of their teachers with considerable enthusiasm and interest. They are very well behaved in class, concentrate well and work hard because 'learning is fun'. This was particularly evident in the two outstanding lessons seen. Many pupils speak of their enjoyment of learning and are pleased at the responsibilities they are given. Pupils feel the school council is giving them a say in 'helping to make the school better'. The school is developing further its already good links with the community and other schools.

Regular physical education lessons, sporting clubs such as judo, outdoor activities and swimming contribute well to pupils' enjoyment and taking healthy exercise. The recent improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have raised pupils' enthusiasm for learning and ICT is beginning to be used to support learning in other subjects such as science, geography and history. More could be done to extend opportunities for pupils to use these, and their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for lower achieving pupils.
- Develop the role of the governing body as a critical friend of the school.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The latest test results from 2007 are significantly better than 2006. Standards in English, mathematics and science are now above average at the expected Level 4. Results at the higher Level 5 are particularly good as pupils are attaining well above average standards in English and science and above average standards in mathematics. Standards in writing overall have also improved significantly from 2006, but relatively less so than those in reading. The school has already identified the need to address this issue in its development plans.

Most pupils achieve well from broadly average standards on entry to the school. This is due to consistently good teaching and challenging targets that are helping to drive up standards. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit make very good progress because of the excellent provision made for their particular needs. Assessment information is shared across the school so that subject leaders have a very clear view of what needs to be done in order to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with social and moral development being real strengths. Pupils freely express how much they enjoy school. This is reflected in the above average attendance. They say that bullying is rare because 'we all get on well together'. Behaviour overall is good. In lessons, behaviour and positive attitudes are excellent and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Behaviour during break times is good, and the new equipment bags are going a long way to dealing with the lively nature of a few pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and the wider community through the work of the school council, various fund raising activities and their links with a school in Kenya. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy through eating sensibly and physical exercise, as well as how to keep safe. Working in pairs and small groups in class helps develop their self-confidence, which along side their good academic achievement prepares them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Learning is good because teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are going to do. The objectives of lessons are shared at the start so that pupils are able to settle quickly to their tasks. This helps to generate a good pace to learning and a purposeful working atmosphere. Pupil-teacher relationships are very good, and as a result, pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest. Pupils talk of enjoying lessons because 'teachers explain things to you and tell you what you have done wrong so you can improve'. However, in some lessons the work planned does not always sufficiently challenge pupils of different abilities. In writing, for example, lower attainers do not always have tasks well matched to their abilities. Teachers' questioning is good, giving opportunities for pupils to expand their answers and ideas. This contributes well to their personal development by making them confident and raising their self-esteem. There is very good support by well-trained support assistants for hearing-impaired pupils, those with learning difficulties and special educational needs, enabling them to play a full part in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum and enrichment activities help to promote pupils' academic skills and their personal development well. Pupils in the hearing impaired unit and those with individual education programmes are given equal access to all areas of the curriculum through carefully planned programmes and very good support. There is a strong focus on developing language skills in literacy and numeracy for all pupils. A good example of work that links different subjects is that of Year 5 pupils on 'the layered rainforest'. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that

more opportunities could be created for pupils to use the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT more consistently across all subjects. Theme weeks such as the 'healthy heart week' enable pupils to develop a good understanding of a healthy life style. The school provides a good range of sporting and musical clubs. It is aware of the views of both parents and pupils in wanting a wider range of activities and has them under review.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care, guidance and support results in all pupils feeling safe and happy. The procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements, are thorough and understood by all staff. The school is very inclusive and all pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are becoming a securely established feature of the care and guidance of the school. Parents appreciate the good support they and their children receive in school. 'Teachers work closely with us so we can all help our son', commented one parent. Transition arrangements with the infant and the secondary schools are good, helping pupils to be confident when moving to the next stage in their education. The arrangements for tracking progress and setting targets to raise standards and achievement are very good. This information is increasingly being used effectively to ensure that individual pupils, particularly those with a statement of special educational need, receive support and are set challenging but realistic targets. The early identification of underachievement enables good additional help to be given quickly to pupils with special educational needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a strongly inclusive school. The inclusion of hearing impaired pupils is excellent. One parent echoed the thoughts of many when declaring, 'I am very happy with this school.' Personal development and well-being are ably supported by a good curriculum and teaching that values pupils' contributions.

The recent change of headteacher has been managed well. The new headteacher has quickly created a shared vision and sense of direction that is moving the school forward and leading the drive to raise standards. Governors give satisfactory support to the school and have started to raise their profile in school and among parents. At present, however, more could be done to improve their role as a critical friend by challenging more, and holding the school to account for the targets set out in the school development plan.

Leadership by subject leaders is well established and they have made a significant contribution to the improved standards. Good use of information about how well pupils are progressing is being used to set realistic and challenging targets that are supporting pupils' achievement. The involvement of pupils in assessing for themselves how well they are doing is developing. The school has a good view of its strengths and weaknesses. As part of its self-evaluation, it has already identified issues over writing and the school development plans have targets to address these.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Westwood Farm Junior School, Reading, RG31 6RY

We were very pleased to visit your school and see you working so hard. We agree with you that your school is good. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. The school council, 'Seniors' from Year 6 and others told us how much you enjoy coming to school and how proud you are of helping the school. We were impressed by your very good behaviour in class and your attitudes to your work.

These are some of the things we think your school does well.

- Most of you are now reaching higher standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher, teachers and other staff, are doing a good job in running the school.
- We think the hearing impaired unit is very good at looking after its pupils.
- Many of you told us how teachers make lessons fun and how helpful they are when you have problems.
- We agree with those of you who told us you feel safe and happy at school.

We think there are some things the school could do better.

- Improve your standards in writing by giving you really challenging work.
- Plan activities in other subjects so that you can use your good skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- Help the governors to be more effective in challenging the school about what it is planning to do.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and by listening carefully. Thank you for making our visit so enjoyable.

Good luck to you in the future

John Collins

Lead inspector