

# Woodside Junior School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110266
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310243
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sean O'Toole

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Slaytor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Harratt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Mitchell Walk Amersham HP6 6NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 725897
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 723897

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	310243

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized junior school. Most pupils are drawn from the immediate area which consists of a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above the national average as is that from minority ethnic backgrounds, although none is at the early stage of learning English. In recent years there have been significant staff changes at the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

'My child feels very happy and secure here and is thriving', said one parent, reflecting the views of many. Pupils speak very positively about the school. They enjoy coming, behave well and are proud to take responsibility. They are friendly and welcoming, form positive relationships and value others. The pupils contribute much to making the school a happy and purposeful place. Following a period of instability, when pupils made uneven progress, the determined headteacher has built a committed team that is focused on raising standards. Her actions, supported fully by the governors, have brought rapid change, resulting in improved and now satisfactory achievement and effectiveness.

The headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to maintain the momentum of improvement and has the backing of all staff. She has correctly identified the need to improve subject leaders' skills in managing their subjects. Accurate analysis of the school's work has led to well-crafted plans to tackle any shortcomings. The headteacher, staff and governors have the confidence of parents and involve them and the pupils in decision-making so that all feel valued. Successes in raising standards in reading and writing, improving behaviour and attendance clearly show the school's good capacity to build on these firm foundations. Standards are average and rising steadily although pupils are less successful in mathematics than English. Many pupils lack confidence in solving complex mathematical problems and some of the work set is insufficiently demanding. Strong support for those with communication and specific learning needs contributes much to the good progress made by these pupils.

Pupils enjoy physical exercise and know how to live healthily and safely. They take a lively interest in the world around them and enthusiastically lead charitable fund-raising such as supporting a school in Ethiopia. Pupils eagerly participate in sporting competitions and are proud of their own and others' achievements. These activities help to prepare pupils for the future and stimulate cooperation and consideration for others.

Pupils like their teachers and respond well in lessons by listening attentively. Teachers plan carefully but do not always use the information gained from assessments to pitch the work at demanding levels and to set targets to guide pupils on what to do next. The teachers' enthusiasm and practical approach make a good impression on the learners. As one parent wrote, 'My son is now very interested in learning and is eager to complete homework'. Staff provide good care and support, and the pupils say that adults listen to and help them. This is particularly the case for less confident pupils who benefit much from the individual attention they receive, working in the room called 'Thinking Space'. Parents are especially pleased with the ethos of the school and commented that, 'there is a strong culture of mutual care and support...creating a foundation for academic progress'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' mathematical skills especially in solving complex problems.
- Improve the use of assessment to pinpoint the next steps in learning so that pupils have well-defined targets and are set work that is more demanding.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders in evaluating and raising standards.

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

Standards are rising steadily, having dipped slightly in 2007 due to a cohort with a large percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. Inspection evidence and the most recent provisional test results show that standards in English and mathematics are broadly average, although pupils lack confidence in solving complex problems. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make consistent and satisfactory progress, although sometimes their work in mathematics is insufficiently demanding. They read well, with expression and fluency and are rapidly improving their writing. Improvements have been achieved through determined leadership that has focused well on developing speaking and listening, providing the right support for readers of all abilities and by frequent checking on pupils' progress and the quality of learning. Those with communication difficulties and specific learning needs are supported well and make good progress. Parents find this aspect of the school's work to be particular pleasing. One wrote, 'My child has been helped beyond what I could have hoped for.'

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

'My son has been at the school for just over a year. He was welcomed, encouraged and loves coming', wrote a delighted parent. Pupils are friendly and helpful. They behave well and show much respect for others. They say that bullying is rare and feel comfortable approaching the staff with any worries. Pupils have good awareness of moral and social issues and keenly support charities. They respond with interest to teaching about other cultures and celebrate their own and others' achievements. The school council take a good lead in valuing other pupils' ideas and promoting improvements. Pupils also respond maturely to the opportunities to take responsibility. They know much about the importance of keeping fit and healthy and respond enthusiastically in physical activities, keenly participating in sporting competitions. Pupils say that they are happy and secure in school and enjoy learning. One girl said, 'It's fun here and everyone gets on. I've made lots of new friends and I'm glad I moved to this school.'

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. As one parent observed, 'All staff are very kind, helpful, supportive and encouraging.' This creates an atmosphere in which the learners are keen to have a go. Support staff are effective in working alongside those with learning difficulties and as a consequence they make good progress. Staff manage behaviour well and use praise to encourage pupils to do their best. They mark work correctly but assessment information is not used consistently to pitch the work in lessons at sufficiently demanding levels. Lessons are well prepared and a good range of resources, including computers are used to interest the pupils. Teachers manage well the help in lessons from governors and parents, to support learning. The staff teach English well and place a strong emphasis on linking speaking and listening with reading and writing. The regular checking on pupils' progress and providing resources and support is helping improve their progress. Although mathematical skills are taught systematically, some lessons are not challenging enough, particularly in extending pupils' skills in solving problems.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school because the curriculum is relevant to their needs and provides good opportunities for them to learn through experience and activity. Staff are increasingly making links between basic skills and other subjects and this is contributing well to pupils' understanding. They enjoy circle times when they discuss sensitive issues. They respond thoughtfully in their lessons in personal, social and health education, listen to each other and empathise with others' feelings. Pupils are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities and participate eagerly in sport, music, dance, drama and cookery. Pupils also say how much they enjoy trips and special events such as celebrating different festivals. They also learn about the wider world in their French and Spanish lessons.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

'My daughter used to have a very negative outlook on school before coming to Woodside...with the staff's help she is now positive and is making good progress not just academically but in her whole well-being.' This statement sums up the good levels of care and support provided by the staff who pay diligent attention to safeguarding all pupils. The pupils' well-being lies at the heart of the school's work. The school successfully supports vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties. Staff provide good academic guidance for pupils in English although this is not as well focused in other subjects so that pupils are not clear about what they need to do to meet targets and to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has made a good start in developing the teaching team and all are committed to ensuring every child's success. The headteacher has the confidence of staff, parents and governors and has led the school out of a period of uncertainty and underachievement. The use of well-crafted plans and robust systems for checking on the work of teachers underpins the strong sense of purpose shared by all staff and governors. Improvement plans accurately pin point the next steps forward. Monitoring is used well to call staff to account for their performance. These robust approaches have resulted in improvement in English. Teachers are beginning to develop leadership skills although more remains to be done to involve them in the monitoring of teaching and learning and assessing the effectiveness of their actions. The school is good at involving its local community, including parents and reaches out to wider communities that helps to enrich pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions. A particularly good feature is the encouragement leadership gives to involving pupils in sport and social activities in the community. Governors have a shrewd understanding of the school's work based on frequent visits and regular meetings that include robust debate about the school's improvement.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

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

**Overall effectiveness**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

---

<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodside Junior School, Amersham, HP6 6NW

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school and for telling me all about it. I enjoyed looking at your work and listening to you discussing what you feel makes your school special. Because your headteacher and the other adults are keen to make the school better they work hard, listen to your suggestions and have made good changes. You have responded very well and your behaviour is now good. You enjoy using computers and are working hard to improve your work. I was pleased to see how you enjoy taking responsibility and how much your school council are involved in making suggestions to improve the school.

Your school provides a satisfactory standard of education and there are several good features that are listed below.

- You are kind and thoughtful and behave well.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.
- You are getting better at reading and writing.
- You are good at helping each other.
- Your headteacher wants the best for you and involves the adults working with you and your parents in improving the school.
- Those of you who sometimes find it difficult to learn get lots of help.

I have asked the teachers to help the school to get even better by thinking about different ways of teaching mathematics. You can help by finding different ways of solving problems. I've also asked the teachers to make sure that they use what they know about you to set work in some lessons that is more challenging. The teachers work together well and I have asked them to develop their skills in leading subjects to make your lessons even better.

I hope that you will always enjoy coming to school and that your work continues to get better.

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Toole

Lead Inspector