

Woolton Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116076
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338719
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Sanders
Headteacher	Rachel Childs
Date of previous school inspection	0 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in school looking at learning. They visited 12 lessons and observed six teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 86 questionnaires received from parents, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which higher expectations of academic performance and the revised curriculum are tackling variation in learning and raising achievement
- how successfully the school's interim leadership team and governing body are influencing the rate of pupils' progress and lifting performance
- how successfully the school promotes community cohesion in this country and beyond.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Almost all the pupils are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Some pupils are taught in classes that contain more than one age group. Among its awards, the school has the Activemark Gold.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a school with a number of strengths. These include teaching and good care and support that place a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem. These strengths provide a solid foundation for learning. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent's comment sums up the views of many: 'The management, teaching and ethos have made every child ...feel valued, important and capable.'

Resolute leadership at the very top has underpinned improvements during a prolonged period of change to the school's leadership and management. The commitment shown by staff and governors is reflected in their determination to gain the best provision and outcomes for all pupils and their families. Governors and school leaders have an increasingly clear understanding of where the school is now and of the improvements needed. Consequently, the school is appropriately placed to move forward.

Pupils start in Year 3 and leave at the end of Year 6 with above average attainment. Strengths in English reflect the good opportunities pupils have to read extensively and write for a wide range of purposes. The overall picture of the school's attainment masks the recent dip in standards in mathematics. However, improvements in teaching are beginning to strengthen pupils' confidence when tackling problems in mathematics early in the key stage.

The drive for consistently good teaching is evident in the continual review of classroom practice. Detailed assessment procedures support successful teaching, which engages pupils and motivates them with interesting activities. Consequently, pupils are progressing well in lessons that are, typically, lively and well paced. However, this positive picture is not consistent in classes where pupils make satisfactory progress because lengthy introductions mean that sufficient challenge is not provided soon enough in the lesson. Closely tailored support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers.

Pupils' good personal outcomes are reflected in their considerate behaviour and enjoyment of learning. They have a good understanding of keeping safe and a thorough awareness of healthy lifestyles. The revised curriculum, which is well enhanced by popular clubs and after-school activities, provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their creative and performance skills. Pupils have few planned opportunities to reinforce skills they learn in some subjects by using them in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are respectful and value each other's views, but have a limited knowledge of communities in other parts of this country. Opportunities for developing this aspect of community cohesion are missed because teachers do not plan to develop

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this through different areas of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, especially in mathematics, by always:
 - including well-paced activities
 - providing challenging tasks that are pitched at the right level.
 - Ensure that the specific skills, knowledge and understanding of different subjects are reinforced in all the areas of the curriculum.
- Extend the strategy for promoting community cohesion by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from different communities nationally
 - ensuring that these matters are included in planning when linking subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There are positive signs that the school's determined efforts are making a considerable difference, resulting in some good progress in academic work and good personal development. Pupils' enjoyment of learning, as seen particularly in their enthusiasm in English, mathematics and art, is characteristic of lessons and indicates the quickening pace of learning across the school. Pupils willingly contribute in lessons and work well individually and in small groups. They respond well to questions, write eagerly, especially when thinking creatively, and show determination in getting the work right, in mathematics for example.

The work seen in lessons and pupils' books reflected an improving picture. The school is on course to overcome the underachievement indicated by the most recent results in the national tests. It is on track to reach its realistic but challenging targets for both English and mathematics in 2010, with more pupils in line to reach the highest level. Pupils are making more rapid progress than they did before, particularly in mathematics at the beginning of the key stage, where the tasks are well focused. However, the rate of progress is uneven through the school. There are no significant differences in progress between different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils say they like coming to school and feel secure in the supportive environment. These positive attitudes are reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils show a good understanding of personal safety, including the precautions needed when gaining access to the internet. They also show much enjoyment of practical activities, including art and physical activities. Pupils show empathy when considering the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. They are considerate towards each other and are aware of dangers in and out of school. They are polite and courteous, and willingly take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly. The school council provides good

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opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others and help make decisions regarding the running of the school. Supported by the school's projects to encourage enterprise, such as fund-raising events and liaising with national agencies to promote local environmental events, pupils' personal skills are developing into influential qualities for when they leave school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good subject knowledge and strong relationships are key strengths of teaching. Well-paced activities and challenging questioning often probe pupils' understanding and give them opportunities to think about their work. Topics, such as those that encourage imaginative writing and provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their answers, successfully capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. Consequently, pupils readily become interested in their learning and want to find out more for themselves. Pupils are happy that they can ask for help when they need it, although they are not always sure what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, long introductions do not take sufficient account of pupils' different starting points early enough.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The revised curriculum provides a careful balance between basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education, music and art. The curriculum is underpinned by the effective use of information and communication technology, which enhances learning and gives pupils access to a wide range of resources. The school has recognised the need to lift aspects of pupils' English, mathematics and scientific skills, and is tackling this area well. To overcome weaknesses in mathematics, for example, the school is giving pupils more opportunities to solve problems in different ways and these are beginning to be effective. Weaknesses in writing have been successfully addressed by giving pupils more opportunities to write for different purposes. However, skills in some subjects, such as writing, are not used often enough in other parts of the curriculum to reinforce the learning. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a wide range of popular clubs and trips, and by a supportive programme of personal, social and health education.

The good support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and much valued by parents and carers. 'Any problem or concern is dealt with efficiently and quickly,' one parent commented. Another spoke of 'a friendly school team ' someone is always on hand if needed by a parent or child'. The close attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected in the many opportunities for physical activity and the provision of healthy school meals. Individualised programmes of support are successfully prepared for vulnerable pupils, covering a broad range of personal and learning needs. These programmes are supplemented by rigorous tracking of the pupils' progress. Evaluations lead to well-focused intervention, which skilfully enhances pupils' literacy skills and builds confidence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's interim leadership, spearheaded by a determined and resourceful headteacher, has established an improving school that is committed to developing each pupil's self-esteem and raising standards. The school has established challenging targets for all aspects of its work. Comprehensive monitoring procedures are effective in identifying the needs of pupils. The school promotes equality and shows resolve in tackling any form of discrimination. As a result, all groups of pupils are making more rapid progress than they did before. Staff have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff feel well supported and they have high

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expectations of where they want their pupils to be by the end of each year.

Governors work closely with the school and are continuing to strengthen their monitoring role. Their strategic involvement has ensured that the school has managed change well and that plans are in place to handle further changes to the school's leadership which are imminent. In addition, policies are systematically reviewed and resources are closely targeted at educational need. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the school's work and safeguarding procedures are established. Local services and agencies are used well to enhance the well-being of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and in the local area. Links and partnerships with other schools nearby and outside agencies are extensive and show a good understanding of local needs and challenges. However, the school's own documentation rightly indicates that it must do more to help pupils understand about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom. Parents and carers are given good opportunities to present their views on the school and benefit from regular contact through newsletters and the website.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all questionnaires were positive, and many of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included remarks about children's good progress and enjoyment of school and the very caring and supportive environment.

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A very small minority of parents and carers recorded reservations over several issues, including the way the school deals with disruptive behaviour, the effectiveness of communication, and the support for their child's learning. These reservations were not reflected in the very large majority of comments and the inspection found evidence to indicate that the school manages behaviour well and is willing to listen to the views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woolton Hill Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	60	33	41	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	74	25	31	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	46	40	49	8	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	38	42	52	9	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	48	40	49	3	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	38	45	56	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	48	44	54	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	41	41	51	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	44	39	48	7	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	40	45	56	5	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	48	35	43	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	63	30	37	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	54	33	41	5	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 January 2010

Dear Pupils

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

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Yours is a school that is improving all the time. It is a place where you feel very safe and benefit from good care and support. You told us it is also a school where you want to be, make lots of friends, and enjoy taking part in the many interesting and exciting clubs and activities. All but a very small number of your parents are happy with the school. You behave well and get on with each other very well.

Here are some more important things about your school.

- You make good progress in some lessons and you enjoy your work.
- Those in charge of the school are making improvements that are helping you to make even faster progress.
- All staff take good care of you, and make sure that you know exactly what to do to keep safe.
- You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:

- Make sure that teaching always challenges you, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that you have enough opportunities to improve specific skills and subject knowledge when working on different projects.
- Help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country.

You can help by continuing to work hard at the tasks and activities you are given. We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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