

# Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	117323
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338991
Inspection dates	23 - 24 September
Reporting inspector	Lynne Kauffman

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 – 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed

Number of pupils on the school roll	231
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Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Akers
Headteacher	Ms Usha Dhorajiwala
Date of previous school inspection	16 - 17 January 2007
School address	Bridge Road West Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 2NU
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Registered childcare provision	BLAST Club
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	30
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	31 August 2006

Age group	3 - 7
Inspection date(s)	23 - 24 September 2009
Inspection number	338991

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors for two days and one additional inspector for one half day to focus on safeguarding. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, teachers, parents, the children's centre manager, the coordinator of the BLAST (Breakfast, Lunch and After School Time) before and after-school club and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, policies and record keeping for safeguarding, the curriculum including Every Child Matters, and teaching and learning policies.

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

- the issue of persistent non-attendance and continuing efforts to raise levels of whole school attendance
- school data collection, to determine whether the use of assessment is now consistent in checking the progress and attainment of all pupils, including special groups in main school and the Early Years Foundation Stage
- governors' involvement in strategic planning and senior leaders' management of improvement in standards, progress and Every Child Matters
- the quality of marking, which was an issue from the previous report
- the status of safeguarding procedures and practice to ensure pupils' safety.

## Information about the school

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School is an average size school with a children's centre. The school serves a mixed catchment area that is typical of most schools. The BLAST club includes a before and after school club, plus a lunchtime session. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language is below average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than in schools nationally. Often pupils across the age range move on to new schools during their time at Woolenwick. Mobility is high throughout the school and particularly in Year 2. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. A building plan has commenced. Inclusion Quality Mark is one of the most recent awards gained by the school.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, in particular its links with parents, its Early Years Foundation Stage programme and its outdoor curriculum.

Whenever pupils join the school, an accurate assessment is made of their prior experience. The majority of children join the school with attainment that is well below expectations for their age. Effective home visits and well-analysed questionnaires ensure the school considers a child's home learning. The school works persistently with the attendance officer, and uses the outstanding networking of the family liaison team and other agencies, to ensure attendance overall is satisfactory. The children's centre team provide excellent care and support vital to families in need.

Outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage includes excellent opportunities for children to develop their individual learning, which is tracked through detailed systems for recording progress. Assessment records clearly illustrate children's success within the Early Learning Goals. Effective leadership of Key Stage 1 by the deputy headteacher has ensured the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the infants is smooth and consistently monitored to identify any pupils who need extra help.

Pupils' progress in class is consistently good and behaviour is excellent. Teachers' planning, marking and verbal feedback have improved since the previous inspection: all aspects of marking are now good. Year 1 pupils understand their targets. Standards in Year 2 were below average for a small percentage of pupils. These pupils experienced considerable disturbance in their previous learning because of poor attendance. The school's 2009 analysis of standards in Year 2 shows an improvement in literacy and mathematics but there remain concerns over standards in writing. Standards are securely average for pupils who have been in school since Reception and overall standards are now broadly in line with average. The data from monitoring shows that pupils who are more able are not sufficiently challenged so they do not always do as well as they should. The school has rightly identified this issue in its development plan.

Pupils love school and their overwhelming enthusiasm and confidence are boosting learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Regular training has improved consistency of assessment. Good in-class support from teaching assistants helps to

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track pupils' progress in relation to their individual education plans and also helps pupils to improve. Learning and teaching are strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 because teachers plan independent, purposeful activities that challenge pupils' creativity and problem solving. Teaching in Year 2 is more tightly structured: for example, pupils do not have as many opportunities to explore learning by doing because teachers are concentrating on settling pupils into good habits for more formal learning. This is a good strategy to compensate for pupils' previous poor attendance that caused disruption to their learning. The local authority uses the school's curriculum development as a model of good practice; the outdoor classroom is an outstanding resource that challenges achievement and personal development. However, despite the good information and communication technology (ICT) centre, lack of computers and associated equipment to support subjects across the curriculum limits pupils' technological development.

Excellent leadership and management by the newly appointed senior leadership team is engaging all staff in reviewing systems, procedures and policies to improve staff involvement in whole school issues. Management is now strong at all levels. Parents are pleased with these improvements. Safeguarding meets requirements. Governors are a strong, diverse team. They have incisive knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which focuses their decision-making. The achievement of the national IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark) emphasises the school's commitment to fairness and equality for all. The school has good capacity to improve.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in literacy and numeracy overall with a focus on writing by:
  - improving teachers planning of and teaching purposeful lessons that engage learners in active participation
  - increasing the application of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum
  - consistently challenging more able pupils
  - implementing and monitoring the policy for gifted and talented pupils.
- Explore all strategies for improving persistent non-attendance. Strengthen the strategies already in place for improving persistent non-attendance by pursuing the issue consistently from Nursery through to Year 2.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils love to learn. By the end of Year 2, they have made good progress but overall standards remain below average. A Year 1 pupil explained 'I know my targets' and was able to show them in his book, and explain how he would improve. Pupils are

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enthusiastic learners, although some teachers miss opportunities to encourage independence and challenge: autonomy in learning is strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1. Successful tracking is highlighting the good progress made by most pupils. School data show a slight improvement in literacy and mathematics from 2007 results. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning to speak English make similar strides in their progress from lower starting points. They receive well-targeted intervention.

Pupils are confident and happy in their surroundings; they feel safe. Their excellent behaviour and empathy for each other consolidate their outstanding relationships. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe. They extend their understanding of the world around them through links with local schools, activities provided by the children's centre and well-planned trips and visits. Attendance at the excellent after-school club boosts pupils' confidence and independence. New skills such as recycling, drama and exercise through aerobics help pupils develop their interests outside school. Parent volunteers at the recycling club helped pupils to make sock puppets and newspaper carrier bags. Pupils had real pride in the items they produced.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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 <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good across the school. Lively new assessment strategies where are

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<sup>1</sup> 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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involved in assessing their own work informs planning and sets challenging targets. Strong professional development ensures teachers are up to date with changes in education including National Strategies. Teachers make good use of pupil data and invest time in quality marking to help pupils improve. Good classroom management ensures outstanding behaviour which helps to support good learning. Where lessons have a purposeful buzz, as seen where 'Bob the Builder' was the focus, learning was intense. Good time management maintained pace, and good resources helped develop pupils' independence and strengthen their skills in mathematics and reading with a special emphasis on writing. In lessons where teachers' strategies were more mundane, pupils were not always sure why they were learning specific skills. Pupils with special educational needs and disability receive good support. In-house programmes developed by support staff are widely used alongside national guidance to develop reading.

Local schools use Woolenwick's overall curriculum design, especially the outdoor curriculum, to enhance their own school's environmental education, sustainability and creative thinking. At playtime, the music centre and the willow igloo inspire adventurous games that fire children's imagination. Pupils have grown vegetables used by the school catering team. Other schools use the innovative nature trail highlighted in a BBC television programme about wildlife. The literacy and numeracy curriculum, specifically limitations in writing, is hindering the school's efforts to raise standards. The computers in the ICT suite are well used but a lack of computer access in classrooms limits the application of ICT across all subjects.

Excellent wrap-around services provided by the school's extensive range of support agencies consolidates outstanding care, guidance and support. Overall attendance is broadly average but there are a small number of persistent non-attenders. A good structured and systematic series of letters and interviews are in place to improve attendance for this group. However there is no consistent drive from the time pupils join the school so that all parents are fully aware of the expectations of the school and the law. The school and local authority use a range of strategies to encourage parents and pupils to see the value of regular attendance. A minority of parents felt there was limited supervision at lunchtime but inspectors found no evidence to substantiate this view.

Parents are very confident in the BLAST club's leaders who have formed a close bond with the infant, nursery and the junior school and have a huge impact on transition as pupils move through their primary education. pupils

*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	1

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff and parents have overwhelming confidence in the leadership and management of the school. Parents explained, 'From the moment the new head teacher arrived, she was out in the playground at the start of the day meeting parents and listening to our views'. The new senior team has strengthened systems and procedures in the school to involve leaders at all levels. Assessment to support planning and progress are sharp and used consistently by all staff. Safeguarding meets requirements through effective procedures and the school makes good use of local authority frameworks for record keeping.

All previous inspection issues have been resolved, supporting the judgement of a good capacity for improvement. The ambitious school development plan involves the school community in understanding its strengths and weaknesses and planning action to make a difference. An exceptional and knowledgeable governing body knows the school well. Several governors spend a significant amount of time in school enabling them to gather information to support asking challenging questions and so inform their strategic planning. The school also works well to ensure there are governors willing to take on different roles and responsibilities, share their skills and maintain the flexibility of the governing body.

Woolenwick is an inclusive school. The Inclusion Quality Mark award illustrates an excellent commitment to inclusion. All teachers focus on matching pupils' individual needs and interests. Pupils, staff and governors promote community cohesion with passion. The programme is active and successful. Documented records illustrate local as well as national and global links. Monitoring and evaluation lead to a series of actions recorded in the development plan.

The school's excellent use of its funds enables a well-focused investment in effective resources and outstanding opportunities for outdoor education. The schools exciting nature trail is used by many schools in the locality. The school has met the financial regulations required.

### *These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the	1



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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The excellent provision has been identified as a strength of the school by an HQS (Hertfordshire Quality Standards) assessment. The outstanding leadership, management, record keeping and assessment, have been used borough wide as a model of outstanding practice. Transition of children to Year 1 is excellent. It enables staff to move up with the pupils helping them to feel confident in the next stage of their learning. The development of children's learning journeys is an excellent example of how the staff gather evidence to inform parents about their children's development. Parents enjoy reading the learning journeys as they can see their children's progress recorded through samples of work and annotated photographs that highlight individual children's progress. The Foundation Stage Profile shows the majority of children are operating at the average expectation.

The setting's inclusive practice allows all children to develop as individuals. Assessment during the first weeks in the nursery gives clear evidence of children's prior learning. This enables staff to measure children's progress from their starting points as they move through Nursery and Reception. Planning covers all areas of learning with a special focus on communication and problem solving. Statutory welfare arrangements are in place. Excellent risk assessment is explicit and safeguarding is a priority. All documentation ensures children's specific health needs and care are recorded and accessible to all staff. Staff use innovative ways to ensure they record pupils small steps of progress on a daily basis. Nursery and Reception play offers exciting child-centred exploration. Children enjoyed acting as explorers in the outdoor area using their binoculars and magnifying glasses to study mini-beasts while others were deeply involved in role-play, building a giant bird's nest. In Reception, the focus is also on first-hand experience. During an observation, a torrent of well managed, excited 2 questions to a mother who brought her new baby into meet the class was later used by the teacher to let the children practice how to love and care for a baby. Story time at the end of sessions enabled interactive responses from young, quizzical minds, and good development for their thinking and creative skills. Leadership and management inspire learners and their parents to be more actively involved in home learning.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

The school had a modest return from the questionnaires for parents and carers. Forty-six responses were received from parents. Views were overwhelmingly positive about their children’s enjoyment of school, their progress, personal development, safety and the chance for parents to share their ideas and suggestions. Equally, parents were supportive of the strengthening school policies, procedures and the drive of the leadership team to improve the school. Parents raised valuable comments concerning the progress of more able children. The school development plan cites this as an area for improvement. A minority of parents felt there was limited supervision at lunchtime but inspectors found no evidence to substantiate this view.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woolenwick Infant and Nursery 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	61	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	52	22	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	10	22	31	67	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	26	33	72	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	41	25	54	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	41	26	57	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	52	21	46	0	0	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)	26	57	18	39	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	30	29	63	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	22	28	61	5	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	20	30	65	5	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	14	30	29	63	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	22	48	22	48	2	4	0	0

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 all 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

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



25 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School, Stevenage, SG1 2NU

I want to thank you so much for being so kind and helpful when we visited your school last week. We really enjoyed exploring your fantastic nature trail and could see how proud you were of your work in class and the brilliant before and after school activities; we hope recycling club had fun playing with their sock puppets.

Your parents are very pleased with your progress; please thank them for filling in the Ofsted questionnaire. The reward stickers you receive and good comments on your work show how much you are enjoying learning. Your teachers and support staff are working very hard to keep you safe, fit and healthy. We enjoyed having lunch with everyone and think you are very lucky to have a catering team who produce such delicious home cooked food for you to enjoy. We thought your work was improving well because most of you know your targets, how to match them and what to do next. Your excellent behaviour and very good manners are a credit to your parents and teachers. Your Nursery and Reception are full of fun ideas for learning and it was good to see so much exploring and good questioning during our visit.

We know your teachers are working very hard to help you improve in class and through home learning, with your parents. To ensure you continue to improve and enjoy learning we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure all lessons get you actively involved in creativity, problem solving and using ICT, especially those of you who have special gifts and talents to explore;
- follow up attendance with your parents if you are often away from school, making sure you attend regularly, so that you continue to progress well, enjoy learning and reach good standards.

With best wishes to you all,

Yours faithfully

Lynne Kauffman  
Lead Inspector

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