



Woolenwick Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117322
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280042
Inspection dates 19 January 2006 to 20 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Michael Milton LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Bridge Road
School category	Community		SG1 2NU
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438216565
Number on roll	202	Fax number	01438315560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Kevin Tooby
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Mike Crabtree

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woolenwick Junior School is broadly average in size, and pupils' attainment on entry is average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is average, and a few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly higher than the national figure. The school has received the Inclusion Quality Mark and the Investors in People award. An acting headteacher has been in post since September 2005, since the secondment of the substantive headteacher to the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school's views and the inspection findings agree that Woolenwick Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but there are marked variations in different subjects, with pupils making the best progress in science. The school has correctly identified that pupils do not make as much progress as they should in English and mathematics. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and has improved recently, though the changes have not yet had sufficient time to impact on learning and so increase pupils' rate of progress. Several important improvements have been made to assessment but these, too, have not yet had sufficient time to have their full impact on improving pupils' learning. The good curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils receive a good level of care, guidance and support, and vulnerable pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Parents are very pleased with the quality of care and education that the school provides. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate and has correctly identified the key priorities for improvement. The school gives good value for money. It has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the progress pupils make in English and mathematics - make greater use of assessment information to help pupils learn as much as possible, especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. In the 2005 national tests, the standards reached by pupils in Year 6 were broadly average in English and mathematics but above average in science. The progress that pupils make is satisfactory, although it varies considerably in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 make good progress in science, satisfactory progress in mathematics but inadequate progress in English. The school reached its target in English last year for pupils attaining the expected Level 4 but failed to do so for the higher Level 5. In mathematics, both targets were just missed, although these targets were sufficiently challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve well because of the enthusiasm and effectiveness of the specialist staff, the good classroom support and the school's systems that effectively promote pupils' involvement in all aspects of the school's life. Similarly, pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress because they are well supported to help them do well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' good behaviour has a positive impact on learning. Many pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy school. They are satisfactorily developing key skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. They take a full part in school life and many seize the opportunities provided through out-of-school activities. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive punctually. Pupils feel safe in school and have adults to whom they know they can turn if they have concerns or worries. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have a good knowledge of different cultures and faiths. They are very aware of how to stay healthy through a range of sporting activities and healthy eating initiatives. The school encourages pupils to keep safe through, for example, a travel plan and by encouraging cycling and walking to school. Pupils make a good contribution to the local and wider community through charity work and visits to, and visitors from, places of interest. The school council is effective in supporting pupils' awareness of whole-school issues and in enabling them to contribute to the school's improvement. Pupils are well prepared for life after school and have good opportunities to learn to collaborate on tasks.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has introduced several improvements to teaching in the last few terms. However, these changes have not had sufficient time to impact on pupils' overall progress. Common strengths of the teaching include: - effective class management and good, encouraging relationships - the sharing of learning objectives with pupils so that they know what they are seeking to learn - the use of the learning objectives as the marking criteria so that pupils can understand how well they have achieved - good use of the interactive whiteboards that teachers link to their computers - the use of strategies to improve pupils' listening and speaking skills - effective use of teaching assistants. In the lessons where learning was less effective, whole-class teaching lasted too long so that pupils did not have enough time for learning as they worked individually or in groups, and assessment did not make clear to pupils what they needed to do to improve their standards. The teaching of English is not yet effective enough in helping more able pupils to make good progress. Several important improvements have been made to assessment but these have not had sufficient time to have their full impact on improving pupils' learning. Marking is undertaken frequently but pupils seldom respond to teachers' comments. There is a thorough system for tracking the progress of individual pupils against specific targets and this information is used to identify any pupils who are underachieving. There are suitable systems to ensure that such pupils receive the support they need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is suitably broad and is well structured to help pupils learn. The pupils' work covers a wide range of activities and experiences, and is based on the national guidance. It is modified well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for the few who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils have good opportunities to carry out practical tasks, and a wide range of visits and visitors enrich their learning. Very good emphasis is placed on the skills of scientific enquiry. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good. The school makes very good use of the expertise of teaching assistants in its provision for ICT and for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The opportunities for enrichment beyond normal lessons are very good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in residential journeys that they enjoy immensely. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music, creative activities, chess and board games, and a homework club. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, including lacrosse and dragon boat racing. Extra-curricular activities are attended by a large proportion of the pupils from the different year groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with good guidance and support. Its care of them is very good. This is especially true for vulnerable pupils who are quickly identified and given outstanding pastoral support. The high quality of care is helping pupils to take a full part in school life, including those who find it difficult to work in large groups or focus on challenging tasks. The well trained staff deal with child protection issues quickly and effectively. All adults who work or help in the school have had the necessary formal checks completed to ensure their suitability for positions. Safety issues, such as those involving journeys to school, are dealt with well. The school has recently improved its tracking of pupils' progress and this is helping it to target support more closely to pupils' learning needs, although this has yet to have an impact on progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. The inspection findings are slightly at odds with the school's own evaluation of itself as being good. Even so, the acting headteacher has a clear vision to provide high quality care and education for the pupils. This vision has been successfully realised for the quality of care, the personal development of the pupils and the enrichment of the curriculum. However, despite the many improvements made to teaching and assessment in the last few terms, pupils are not yet making sufficiently good progress, especially in English. The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is good. It correctly identifies the key priorities for improvement in the school development plan. The school regularly surveys the views of parents and pupils, and these views inform development planning.

For example, in the last few terms, the leadership responsibilities have been made clearer than they were previously and individual staff are now held more accountable for the effectiveness of their work. The monitoring and evaluation of lessons is accurate and the information is used well to improve the quality of teaching. The well informed, committed governing body carries out its responsibilities effectively. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has successfully addressed all of the key issues and improved pupils' personal development a great deal. It has good capacity for improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed meeting you and the staff when we visited your school. Thank you for welcoming us and being so polite and helpful. It was good to talk to many of you during lessons and playtimes, as well as during lunchtime meetings with the school council and a group of Year 6 pupils. We learnt a lot about the school from you. For example, it was good to hear that the school council is working well, that you are well cared for, that you make plenty of use of ICT and that you like your teachers. There are many school clubs you can join and you can learn lots of different sports. The school provides good visits linked to what you are learning in class. Years 5 and 6 really enjoy the residential journeys. You make good progress with your science but do not do as well with your English and mathematics. Since last September, you have had targets for English and mathematics. These are helping you to learn more. All your teachers know what needs to be done in future to make the school even better, and we agree with them. The main things to do are to carry on: - using the different levels, grades and comments about your work (these are sometimes called 'assessments') to help you to learn even more - making improvements to the teaching of English and mathematics so that you learn at a quicker rate. You can help with these improvements by continuing to behave well and work hard, and by thinking about the things you can do to make your work better.