

Westwood Farm Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109845
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	356642
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

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 of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros Hatt
Headteacher	Janet Southern
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in twenty lessons taught by nine teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 99 pupils, 27 staff and 85 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How successfully the school is working to accelerate progress and raise attainment, particularly in mathematics.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether the quality of teaching and learning and the rigour and accuracy of assessment are good enough to ensure that all pupils are challenged at the right level and make good progress, particularly more able pupils.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in raising achievement and sustaining improvement.

Information about the school

The school is of average size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are an average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs mainly relate to hearing impairment, speech, language and social communication difficulties, autism, moderate and specific learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a department for hearing-impaired pupils, which currently supports six pupils. There have been three headteachers in the last five years. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school gained the Healthy Schools award in 2009 and the Basic Skills Agency award in 2010.

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 school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is a cohesive community which offers a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment where all pupils, especially those in the hearing-impaired base, settle quickly because they feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Parents and carers appreciate the good level of care, guidance and support their children receive and express very positive views about the school. They are keen to know how to support their children's learning.

The school is successfully emerging from a difficult period when frequent changes in leadership slowed the pace of progress. The headteacher has quickly got to grips with what needs to be done. Together with staff and members of the governing body she has undertaken a thorough and accurate process of self-evaluation which has motivated the whole school in a relentless focus on improvement. Despite an uneven distribution of responsibilities, senior leaders and staff are very conscientious and form a strong team who share the headteacher's vision and passion for improvement. The successful actions taken to address deficiencies have already ensured that levels of attendance are high, behaviour is good and rates of progress in reading and writing are improving. The school's well-considered plan for development recognises that more has to be done to accelerate progress and improve achievement in mathematics, particularly for boys and the more able pupils. All of this confirms the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Attainment is average at the end of Year 6. Mathematics is the weakest area. A recent local authority audit of mathematics has provided a firm basis for further improvement. There are a few teachers who do not feel confident in teaching some areas of mathematics, and a previous misunderstanding about what constitutes good progress has sometimes led to complacency. The lack of a consistent approach to calculation sometimes confuses pupils and slows their progress. Although the school's effective tracking system picks up underachievement, the current system of dividing pupils into two ability groups is not accelerating progress because groups are too large and work is not sufficiently well tailored to pupils' needs.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Much is better than this, for example when the pace of learning is brisk and expectations are high, pupils' progress is good. However, this quality is not consistent across the school. In a few lessons the pace of learning drops and progress slows. There are lessons where pupils, particularly the more able, are not sufficiently challenged because assessment is not used effectively to plan pupils' next steps in learning. Some teachers' marking is good and helps pupils to improve their work; however, this is not always the case and pupils are not always given time to correct their work. Teaching assistants work hard and support pupils well but there are times when there can be up to four other adults in one classroom, just sitting and listening to the teacher's explanations.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, improve progress and achievement in mathematics by:
 - providing well-planned and effective professional development to improve teachers' confidence in teaching mathematics
 - increasing the percentage of pupils making three or more sub-levels of progress in one year
 - ensuring that basic skills are taught systematically and there is a consistent approach to calculation
 - implementing swift and effective interventions to address underperformance, particularly for boys and the more able.
- By July 2012, improve teaching to a good or better level by ensuring that:
 - assessment data are used effectively to set and adapt work to provide appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able
 - expectations are consistently high and all lessons progress at a good pace
 - all teachers mark work consistently and regularly so that pupils know and understand what they have to do to improve and have the time to do their corrections
 - teaching assistants are deployed effectively.
- By July 2012, improve leadership and management by:
 - redistributing roles and responsibilities more evenly in order to increase the pace of progress
 - improving communications with parents and carers so that they know what their children are doing and how they can help them improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress through the school to reach broadly average levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress because they benefit from appropriate support in class. Extremely well-tailored sessions in the hearing-impaired unit before and after pupils join their classes, together with a high level of very good support in the lessons, enables pupils with hearing impairments to make good progress. Boys are not always motivated and while they are consistently well behaved, their work rate is not always as fast as that of girls, particularly in mathematics. However, where the pace is brisk and learning consists of practical activities, all pupils make good progress. For example, the top Year 6 group enjoyed the challenge of a practical, quick-fire mental starter involving multiple computation skills. The teacher's high expectations ensured that this brisk pace of learning carried through into the main activity, to choose effective strategies to solve problems. Opportunities to reflect on their learning and discuss

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possibilities with a partner ensured that pupils were confident to make choices based on secure knowledge and understanding.

A positive ethos results from the good care that pupils receive. This contributes effectively to the development of the pupils' personal qualities. Pupils work and play harmoniously, their behaviour is good and the level of attendance is high. They say there is very little bullying and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and know what they must do to lead healthy lifestyles. They enjoy a healthy choice at lunchtime and fruit for their break. They are proud of what members of the school council have done, for example the water fountain that they have had installed and the playground equipment they can all enjoy.

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	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good, it is accurately matched to pupils' ability and teachers use their own good subject knowledge and understanding effectively to deepen and extend pupils' learning. For example, good opportunities to think about and then discuss their responses helped Year 5 pupils refine their thinking and play an active part in their learning when evaluating their own 'freeze frames' for 'The Highwayman' poem. They enjoyed responding to the teacher's probing questions which challenged them to analyse what could be improved. However, there are lessons where pupils sit passively, listening to the teacher and not always being engaged, especially when the work is too easy or too hard.

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On a few occasions, in mathematics, teachers are more reliant on delivering learning through exercises in textbooks and are less alert to pupils' misunderstandings. Sometimes marking shows pupils how they can improve their work, particularly in literacy, but it is not always as careful, particularly in mathematics. Some teachers use interactive whiteboards well to exemplify learning. However, in a few mathematics lessons, freehand drawing of shapes and parallel lines do not help pupils to understand mathematical principles.

The curriculum provides pupils with a strong emphasis on literacy. However, it does not always build systematically on pupils' prior experience in mathematics and gaps in learning sometimes occur where knowledge, understanding and skills are less secure. Interesting topics motivate pupils and make learning meaningful, and themed events, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Modification of the curriculum for the hearing impaired is exemplary. Although seamlessly integrated within their class, individual and group withdrawal sessions before and after lessons provide a highly tailored programme to fit their individual learning needs.

Pupils feel happy and secure because they know that there is a good level of care, guidance and support and that there is always someone there to listen, help or advise. The care, guidance and support the hearing-impaired base offers pupils are of extremely high quality and pupils derive great benefit from this nurturing environment. Good arrangements ensure that new pupils are quickly and smoothly inducted into the school. Similarly, there are good arrangements for pupils to transfer on to their secondary education. As a result, pupils are happy and confident learners.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 new headteacher has united the efforts of senior leaders, instilled confidence and motivated staff. Members of the governing body, senior leaders and staff share her enthusiasm to seek further improvement and raise achievement. Although there has been insufficient time to see impact on all major priorities, high expectations with regard to attendance have resulted in high levels of attendance. A focus on guided reading has improved progress in reading, and where initiatives have been implemented in writing, they are reflected in improvements in pupils' achievement. The school recognises that the way responsibilities are currently distributed affects the pace of progress.

Members of the governing body discharge their statutory responsibilities, ensure that pupils and staff are safe and are keen to support the school effectively. There is a new chair and vice chair and a new clerk. They are making it their business to acquaint

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themselves with what goes on in school and are becoming increasingly well informed and better placed to make a more strategic contribution to the work of the school.

The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers. It recognises that parents and carers want to help their children improve and is eager to help them. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is satisfactory. The school's accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. Consequently, the school recognises that progress is not yet consistently good across the school and that boys and more able pupils do not always do as well as they could. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. The site is secure, entry is restricted and visitors monitored. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child-protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and records are kept meticulously.

The school's strategy to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. It has had a positive impact on the school and local community but evidence of its success in promoting community cohesion beyond the immediate community is limited.

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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

In the average return, most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about most aspects of school life. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children enjoy school, and that care for their health and safety is good. Parents are happy with the teaching that their children receive and the way that the school is led and managed. A very large majority say they are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few indicated that they did not think that their child was making enough progress. Evidence from the inspection shows that although all groups of pupils make

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satisfactory progress, more able pupils do not always do as well as they could, nor do boys in mathematics. A few felt that the school did not take account of parents' concerns and suggestions. The school recognises this and plans to organise a parents' focus group in the autumn and workshops to help parents and carers support their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Westwood Farm 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 inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	46	39	46	3	4	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	55	65	29	34	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	29	49	58	4	5	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	33	42	49	13	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	45	42	49	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	31	49	58	8	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	39	47	55	4	5	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)	27	32	48	56	4	5	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	32	41	48	12	14	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	33	43	51	8	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	22	46	54	6	7	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	27	32	41	48	9	11	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	48	34	40	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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



8 July 2011

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You were very helpful, polite and friendly. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are a lot of things your school does well.

You told us that you thoroughly enjoy school and that you feel very safe. We found that everybody in school looks after you well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. We were impressed with your high attendance rate and your clear understanding and knowledge of how to keep healthy. We could see that you behave very well, get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have asked them to do three things.

- Make sure all lessons are good and continue to work on mathematics so that you always do as well as possible.
- Change the way senior leaders share out their work so that the school gets even better - more quickly!
- Give your parents and carers advice on how they can help you to improve.

We would like you to help. Your teachers will be marking your work as carefully as possible and we would like you to make sure you do your corrections. Keep up the great fund raising and good luck with your end of term productions!

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest, especially with your mathematics, so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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