

Westwood Farm Junior School

Fullbrook Crescent, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 6RY

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved notably since the last inspection. Leadership and governance have evolved. Teaching has improved markedly and pupils achieve increasingly well.
- The arrival of the executive headteacher has brought fresh impetus. Together with her leadership team she has swiftly secured a step change in the school's performance.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that staff are provided with the training and support needed in order to be effective.
- Leaders have tightened the use of additional funding to maximise the impact it has on the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Both groups of pupils are achieving increasingly well.
- Pupils across the school are making increasingly good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 who were behind as a result of previous weaker teaching are catching up.
- The refreshed curriculum provides a wealth of engaging opportunities which motivate pupils to learn well across a range of subjects.
- Teachers know their pupils well and set work of suitable challenge for pupils of differing abilities. This, coupled with clear explanations and effective questioning, supports pupils to learn well.
- Although the curriculum and teaching have improved markedly, they do not yet promote a high degree of learning across all subjects.
- Teaching captures pupils' interest and imagination. They gain the confidence to 'have a go', and learn from their mistakes.
- Leaders and teachers make sharp use of assessment to identify and tackle any area of weakness in English and mathematics. Use of assessment in other subjects is less well developed.
- Pupils enjoy school. They pay attention in class and work hard. The care and attention to detail that pupils show in their work is commendable.
- Pupils' conduct is often exemplary around the school and in class. They are polite and welcoming to visitors and follow routines in a calm and orderly manner.
- Pupils feel safe and learn how to keep safe. They know they can turn to school staff with any concern. Unkindness and bullying are rare.
- Pupils know to show respect to others regardless of differences. However, pupils' understanding of the nature of discrimination and prejudice and how it might be challenged is not consistently well developed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching consistently enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and gain an increasingly high degree of skill across all subjects.
- Ensure that leaders and governors have an incisive understanding of the effectiveness of the entire curriculum so that any weakness is recognised and tackle effectively.
- Make sure pupils develop a broad understanding of diversity in modern Britain and the nature of discrimination and prejudice and how they can challenge it.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and governance have evolved since the last inspection and both aspects are increasingly strong. The arrival of the executive headteacher has brought fresh impetus and momentum. Together with her leadership team, she has swiftly secured a step change in the school's performance.
- Staff across the school share a commitment to making a difference for all the school's pupils. A sense of determination, optimism and a 'can do' attitude permeate all areas of school life. Staff, parents and pupils alike share a belief in the school and its leadership. One staff member summed this up as follows: 'The atmosphere has transformed and the school seems a happier and more inclusive place for all.' A parent echoed this, stating that the executive headteacher has 'brought such positivity into the school'.
- Leaders have created a culture of continuous improvement. They make sure that teachers receive the support and training needed to become increasingly effective. Leaders make good use of the information they collect about the quality of teaching and teachers' own reflections on their performance to ensure that support and training are effective.
- Teachers who need it benefit from coaching which helps them improve weaker elements of their practice. Weekly after-school sessions focus helpfully on areas of development relevant to all. Teachers' attendance at courses and meetings with teachers from other schools helps them learn from good practice elsewhere.
- Staff were almost unanimous about the effectiveness of this work. One teacher captured the staff mood, stating that leaders are 'incredibly supportive of my development. I feel safe sharing frustrations and successes without being judged and know I can get the help I need for myself and children. I wouldn't want to work anywhere else.'
- Leaders make very effective use of the information they collect about pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. Regular meetings with teachers focus on pupils who are not achieving as well as they should. Leaders make sure that teachers leave the meeting equipped with strategies to help these pupils improve. The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SENCo) and the pupil premium leader now also attend these meetings. This helps ensure a high focus on the achievement of these pupils.
- Leaders have sharpened the way they spend additional funding and evaluate the effectiveness of the spending. Leaders have put a stop to approaches proven to have little effect and introduced methods known to work in other schools. The school's pupil premium strategy is much improved. It now includes a sound rationale for each element of the proposed spending for the year, with clear expectations for success. Leaders' diligent checks tell them how well the new approach is working so adjustments can be made, as needed. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are typically making at least sound and often strong progress from their starting points in English and mathematics.

- The SENCo has recognised and is tackling previous weaknesses in provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The identification of pupils who have such a need is now more accurate. The SENCo is holding teachers to account much more tightly for the progress of these pupils. An improved range of support is also in place.
- Careful assessment of what pupils can do when they begin a support programme means leaders can evaluate the impact of the support on a pupil's progress better than in the past. It is too early for leaders to judge the specific success of each of these programmes. However, inspection evidence indicates that combined improvements in teaching and support are having a notable impact on pupils' achievement.
- The leader of the hearing resource base (HRB) makes sure its pupils get the support needed to learn well in mainstream lessons. Training for all staff has helped ensure that these pupils can access learning successfully and make good progress. Back at the base, pupils benefit from more individualised specialist teaching which helps them prepare for and consolidate their learning in class. Regular speech and language therapy supports appropriate development of pupils' communication skills. Other suitable support, such as for emotional development, is provided as needed.
- The curriculum is increasingly broad, balanced and effective. Leaders made a wise decision to revamp and expand the previously narrow curriculum. As a starting point, they implemented a commercial scheme known to work well elsewhere. Although in some ways it is still at an early stage of development, the improvement it has made to teaching is clear. Engaging projects capture pupils' interest and promote sound learning in most subjects.
- Leaders are keeping a check on curriculum developments and starting to make adjustments in a bid to ensure that each subject is covered in a way that supports good progress for pupils. In so doing, they have quickly pinpointed some areas of subject content that are difficult to teach as part of a wider project. Leaders are making sure these aspects are taught separately. However, leaders are clear that this is still very much a work in progress. Additionally, the development of a suitable method for assessing the impact of the curriculum on pupils' achievement in science and foundation subjects is at quite an early stage. Encouragingly, there is a firm foundation to build on and leaders display the determination and insight needed to bring further improvement.
- The school provides a wide range of clubs which promote pupils' wider development. Sports clubs prove popular. Other well-attended clubs such as philosophy club, choir and mathematics challenge club cater for pupils' different interests. Pupils also benefit from and were keen to talk about memorable visits which had enhanced their learning in school. This included learning about what school was like in Victorian times at the Victorian school room in Reading and trips to the Winchester and Bristol science museums.
- Assemblies, topic work and special events help pupils learn about life in modern Britain. For example, a week focused on values has helped pupils develop their understanding of democracy and law. Pupils in Year 3 talked about how they have learned the importance of treating all with respect, regardless of difference. Nevertheless, the extent to which the curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of diversity, prejudice and equal rights is quite limited. Similarly, although pupils develop a sound

understanding of the key tenets of different faiths in religious education lessons, their understanding of the prevalence of different faiths and beliefs in the region and in Britain as a whole is not as strong.

- Leaders have strengthened the way they tackle poor attendance. They keep a tight watch for any pupils with emerging attendance issues to ensure there is a swift response. Improved communication with parents, along with better support in the form of a family worker, is helping to ensure that all groups of pupils attend well and arrive on time.
- Leaders have improved their approach to the use of sports funding. Previously, arrangements for evaluating the impact of the funding on pupils' achievement and participation in sport were not tight enough. There was no final evaluation produced on the effectiveness of spending in 2015–16. This year, suitable spending plans are in place. Leaders have identified the intended outcome of each part of the spending. They are checking that the current provision of sports coaches and training for staff is having the desired effect.
- The local authority has provided helpful and timely support throughout the school's improvement journey. Regular visits to the school by the linked local authority officer have helped ensure the school is on track to become a good school. The local authority reviews of pupil premium and special educational needs spending, carried out in the summer of 2016, were particularly helpful. These provided a clear steer for new leaders joining the school. Leaders are very appreciative of the support provided to get the school's information technology systems up to date and fit for purpose. Governors value the training they access from the local authority governors services team. Leaders draw usefully on other support, such as that from the local teaching school alliance, the local secondary and the school link group. However, leaders are finding support for the development of some foundation subjects hard to come by.

Governance of the school

- Governance is increasingly strong. Governors know the school well and have an incisive understanding of most aspects of the school's performance. They make good use of the information leaders provide about teaching and pupils' achievement, along with regular reviews of the effectiveness of the school improvement plan. This helps governors satisfy themselves that the school is continuing to improve and question any area where further attention is needed.
- Governors tend to their own development, making good use of training opportunities provided by the local authority as well as learning from the experience of governors in other schools. Recent training, led by the executive headteacher, has helped them glean more from their visits to school, so they can verify effectively that what leaders tells them is correct.
- Governors recognise that in their drive to improve teaching and achievement their attention to some aspects of the school's performance has, understandably, been less sharp. For example, governors know from first-hand experience that pupils show respect to one another and incidents of discrimination are rare. However, they do not know the extent to which the school curriculum is successful in developing pupils' understanding of prejudice, stereotyping and equal rights.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff are rigorous. Leaders make sure staff receive appropriate training and are up to date with latest government requirements. Staff know the importance of referring any concern they have about a pupil's safety to the leader responsible. Leaders liaise with other agencies when needed to make sure any pupil at risk of harm receives a suitable level of support. Pupils who are emotionally vulnerable benefit from the support of the emotional literacy support assistants (ELSA). The chair of governors carries out regular visits to make sure all is in order. She also ensures that all governors have appropriate training. Communication with parents is sound. They know who to go to with any safeguarding concern. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are ambitious for their pupils. They have a good understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and set work that helps pupils learn well. Teachers' clear explanations and effective questioning help ensure pupils are suitably supported and challenged. As a result, pupils make sound progress.
- Teachers are skilled in helping pupils to understand what they are learning, reflect on successes, acknowledge mistakes and seek ways to improve. Teachers' high expectations and attention to detail rubs off on pupils. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson pupils paid great attention to getting the scale right on their line graphs and plotting the data they had been given accurately. They knew where they had gone wrong in the previous lesson and displayed the determination needed to get it right the second time around.
- Pupils take care and pride in their work and standards of presentation are typically high across subjects.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment. They provide activities with different levels of challenge to ensure that pupils tackle work suited to their varying abilities. The school's approach of allowing pupils to choose the activity to work on is effective. Typically, pupils know when they are ready to go further and when they need to consolidate what they have learned already. They are not content to take the easy option. Rightly, staff provide guidance about choice of task when needed.
- Teaching in mathematics has improved notably. The approach summed up in the school's mantra: 'know it, use it, prove it' helps ensure a sharp focus on deepening pupils' mathematical understanding. Pupils now have rich opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to different contexts and make links between different mathematical concepts.
- Teaching of reading is increasingly effective. Pupils read regularly in class, and explore their reading with the teacher to strengthen their comprehension skills and broaden their vocabulary. Some Year 5 boys explained how they value the way this helps them make connections between reading and writing. Discussion about how authors use words to evoke specific responses in the reader helps them do the same in their own

writing. Leaders' current push to encourage more reading at home is working. Pupils who find reading difficult are now provided with suitable extra support which is helping build their confidence and skills.

- Teaching promotes writing skills well. Pupils learn how to structure writing and write effectively, drawing suitably on existing examples. They learn to check and edit their writing as a matter of routine.
- Support staff make a strong contribution to teaching. Teachers and support staff work well together to make good use of time. For example, a teaching assistant spending time guiding and supporting the most able pupils to get to grips with a challenging task enabled the class teacher to work with other pupils who needed further teaching to grasp the learning. Pupils who need it also benefit from extra support out of class which helps them learn well.
- The way the new curriculum is planned is helping ensure that teaching promotes strong progress in most subjects. However, this is not universally the case. The skills and knowledge required for each subject are in the main taught through topics that cover several subjects at once. As a result, some aspects of subjects are not fully covered. For example, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply design and technology skills to develop, test and refine an initial idea into a successful solution to an identified problem. Also, none of the topics provide opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge of computing to program, monitor or control their designs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and they develop the habits needed to succeed. They pay attention to the teacher and other adults when needed. Pupils make an effort and show resilience in the face of mistakes. Older pupils, in particular, show confidence as they discuss and explore ideas with one another.
- Pupils are safe and well cared for. They know there is always an adult at hand who will help resolve anything of concern. Pupils were keen to point out to inspectors the 'ELSA' room, where they know they can seek further support if they are feeling emotionally vulnerable. The 'happy hub' provides a welcome for any pupil struggling to make friends. Incidents of bullying are almost unheard of.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe online. Regular reminders throughout the year, as well as a specific focus on the issue during internet safety week, help keep e-safety at the forefront of pupils' minds. Pupils also learn to stay safe beyond school, for example when using the road and out and about in the community.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities to learn about food and healthy eating. For example, pupils in Year 3 recently studied the different food groups and how these can contribute to a balanced diet. Assemblies reinforce the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' physical health is promoted well through sports activities and clubs.

- Pupils learn the importance of respecting others who are noticeably different from themselves. Almost all who responded to the pupil survey agreed that teachers encourage them to do this. Incidents of unkindness are uncommon and discriminatory behaviour is rare. However, pupils' exact understanding of diversity and prejudice is less well developed.
- Leaders make sure that there is frequent communication with Brookfields Special School to make sure any pupil using both settings is safe and attends well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in class is often excellent and typically calm and considerate. Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors and show respect to staff and one another.
- At break and lunchtime, pupils play happily together outside, burning off energy playing games or socialising with their friends. The dining hall is a model of order and routine. Pupils report that at times a few pupils do not behave so well. However, this is not typical and is dealt with well by adults.
- Any pupil who finds behaving well a challenge is provided with helpful support in the form of a learning mentor. This helps the pupil moderate their behaviour and avoid exclusion. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are rare and there have been no exclusions during this school year.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and overall attendance is high. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not had such high attendance in recent times. However, as a result of better leadership their attendance has recently improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are achieving increasingly well in most subjects and developing the skills and attributes needed to be well prepared for secondary school and the wider world.
- In 2016, on average, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 was below the national figures in mathematics and low in reading. Progress in writing was broadly average. Improved teaching and support means that current pupils are typically making good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good use of their reading skills to learn in other subjects. Pupils write with increasing sophistication and accuracy as they progress through the school. They learn to edit their work and make sure it is fit for its intended audience, be it fiction or non-fiction writing. This promotes good learning across academic subjects. Extra support for pupils who find spelling difficult, introduced last autumn term, is helping them improve. Most pupils now spell at the standard expected for their age.
- Ample opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding to solve problems and prove their reasoning help them develop into confident mathematicians.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are making increasingly good progress in lessons and in the extra support sessions they attend.
- The most able pupils also typically make good and often strong progress. However, because of previous poor teaching, few are working at a high standard for their age. Encouragingly, pupils are catching up increasingly quickly due to the improved range of extra support and the typically high level of challenge they now receive.
- The improved curriculum is increasingly promoting strong learning for pupils with differing starting points in most subjects. This was particularly evident in science, history and geography.
- Pupils' achievement in a few subjects is not consistently strong. This is because opportunities for pupils to acquire and apply skills and knowledge which do not fit well into the school's current range of topics are somewhat limited.

School details

Unique reference number	109845
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10024527

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Goddard
Headteacher	Barbara Hunter
Telephone number	0118 942 5182
Website	www.westwoodfarmschools.w-berks.sch.uk
Email address	officejuniors@westwoodfarmschools.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 December 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and the physical education and sport premium on its website.
- The school is near the average size for primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British, and almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having additional special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national figure. The proportion with an education, health and care plan is high.
- There is a local authority funded unit, located in the school, for up to 10 children with hearing impairment – the hearing resource provision (HRP). This provision is currently catering for four pupils from the junior school.

- The school uses the Brookfields Special School to provide alternative provision for any pupil who needs it. A very small number of pupils attend this provision on a part-time basis.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for attainment.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school is federated with the Westwood Farm Infant School, which is on the same site. One governing body oversees the work of both schools, and several staff have responsibilities across both schools.
- The executive headteacher took up post in September 2016. She has overall leadership of the junior and infant school. There is a head of school for the junior school.
- The leader responsible for pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities and the leader responsible for pupil premium spending both joined the school in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 11 lessons jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from a range of subjects including English and mathematics and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher and the head of school. Discussions were also held with members of the governing body, teachers, pupils and parents. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed documents including safeguarding policies, behaviour and attendance records, self-evaluation and planning documents and the school's records on performance management and teaching and learning.
- Account was taken of 28 staff survey responses and 24 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors considered 12 parents' responses by free text.
- There were no replies to Ofsted's online pupil survey. However, inspectors took into account 208 responses to a paper-based version of this survey that school leaders carried out during the inspection.

Inspection team

Diana Choulerton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Becky Greenhalgh

Ofsted Inspector

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