

# Nascot Wood Junior School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117311
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	290795
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gillian Smith

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lyn Trodd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Holcombe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Nascot Wood Road Watford Hertfordshire WD17 4YS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 238784
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 445900

---

<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	290795

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Nascot Wood Junior School is average in size and the socio-economic circumstances of many pupils are relatively advantaged. Standards on entry to the school are generally above average. Although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, none are at an early stage of learning English. Eligibility for free school meals and the proportion of pupils who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average.

The school holds the Healthy Schools, Activemark 2006, Football Association Charter Standard and Investors in People awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education and this judgement matches the school's view of its own effectiveness. The school provides a calm and purposeful working environment and pupils' enthusiasm for learning is reflected in their positive attitudes, good personal development and behaviour, and consistently high levels of attendance. These reflect the strong focus on good pastoral care and welfare and ensure pupils feel safe and well looked after.

In the two and half years since the headteacher took up post, he has focused on increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning by encouraging a wider, more creative range of learning activities. This has resulted in a well-planned and structured curriculum that enthuses pupils. He has also restructured the senior leadership team to involve them more fully in school self-evaluation and improvement planning. As a consequence, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, reflecting school leaders' common sense of purpose and satisfactory knowledge of how well the school is doing. However, these changes have not been in place long enough to reverse the recent decline in standards and achievement. Although the school has a clear and agreed set of priorities for improvement, plans focus too sharply on what staff will do, rather than on how these actions will help pupils to make more rapid progress. The school has successfully addressed the issues from the previous report, enhanced the curriculum and further strengthened excellent links with the contributing infant school. It is therefore satisfactorily placed to improve further. The school gives sound value for money.

Since the last inspection, overall standards have been at least above average and often exceptionally high, especially in English and mathematics. Current standards are above average and pupils make satisfactory progress from their above average starting point. This sound achievement is the result of satisfactory teaching. Although there are some strengths, such as the use of interactive whiteboards, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers use assessment information to plan lessons to challenge all pupils and promote effective learning. Some teachers' primary focus is on the timing and organisation of the various activities that will take place during lessons, as opposed to considering the impact these activities will have on learning. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall; although there are strengths in pastoral care, there are weaknesses in academic guidance. This means the school is not always timely in the identification of pupils who are at risk of underachievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' lesson planning focuses more clearly and precisely on what pupils of different abilities will learn, rather than merely lists the activities they will cover.
- Sharpen the use of assessment information to identify early any pupils who are at risk of underachieving to ensure they receive challenging work and effective support.
- Ensure that school improvement planning focuses more sharply on how actions taken will accelerate pupils' learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Prior to 2005, the overall standard of pupils' work at the end of Year 6 was exceptionally high, with particular strengths in English and mathematics. In 2005 and 2006, the overall standard at the end of Year 6 fell, though it was still above average. The school attributes this decline to an unsettled period involving senior staff changes. Nonetheless, the school exceeded its targets for English and mathematics in 2006 and the school's tracking system indicates that pupils will meet the targets in 2007. Although there have been minor fluctuations over the years, standards have been most consistently and exceptionally high in English and mathematics, and above average in science.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and there are no significant differences between the progress made by pupils from different groups or ethnicities. The progress made by White British pupils is slightly below that made by other pupils, and those for whom English is an additional language make slightly faster progress than others in the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They enjoy coming to school and there is little they would like to change; they like their teachers and think that the various reward schemes are motivating and fair. Most of the pupils behave well and willingly undertake their work set by their teachers. Although a few pupils can become restless in class, most remain courteous, listen well and are keen to answer questions.

Pupils willingly assume responsibility and are pleased with the way the school listens to, and often acts upon, their comments and suggestions. Pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle and take plenty of exercise. They swim regularly in the school's pool and appreciate the increasingly healthy lunches. Although a small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying, pupils disagree and say that any such incidents are dealt with effectively. They make a valuable contribution to the school and wider community by, for example, organising charity fund raising and supporting incoming Year 3 pupils. Pupils' good basic skills and strong personal qualities equip them well for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and use interactive whiteboards skilfully to capture and hold their attention. They also make good use of the laptop computers to enable pupils to find information and record it in imaginative ways, as in a Year 6 history lesson on Victorian London. Some of the teachers' marking in pupils' books is helpful in telling them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. However, marking is not always of this high calibre and some teachers only provide ticks, with few written comments. Planning for lessons too often highlights the topics and tasks pupils will cover rather than the skills and knowledge they will acquire from the activity they are undertaking. Although the school has clear systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics, there is little evidence in teachers' lessons plans of this information being used to plan work for the full range of

abilities within each class. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. The recent introduction of additional literacy and numeracy intervention programmes is helping to improve their basic skills in reading and writing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all learners well, including those from minority ethnic groups. The school's strong focus on broadening the curriculum and balancing the core subjects of English, mathematics and science with other subjects contributes to pupils' good personal development and enthusiasm for school. These changes are helping to make learning more exciting and engaging for the pupils, but are too recent to have had a demonstrable impact on pupils' levels of achievement. Teachers increasingly give pupils effective opportunities to reinforce their information and computer technology (ICT) skills by incorporating them into other subjects. Provision in art and design has improved since the last inspection, and is now good. Links with outside agencies are effective and visiting speakers and specialist teaching in, for example, physical education enhances pupils' enjoyment of learning. Good personal, social and health education ensures that pupils know how to stay safe and keep themselves healthy through a balanced diet and plenty of exercise.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

This school looks after its pupils well and this good care helps to put pupils in a calm and positive frame of mind. All procedures for safeguarding pupils' health and safety and child protection are in place. Pupils feel safe and say their teachers always try to help if they have a particular problem. Close links with partner schools help to smooth pupils' transition into Year 3 and their eventual move to secondary school at the end of Year 6. There are appropriate procedures in place regarding the management and reporting of racist incidents.

Educational guidance is satisfactory. In spite of marking being variable, most of the pupils know their current and target levels in English and mathematics and what they have to do to improve their work. The school regularly assesses pupils' work and tracks their progress carefully. However, the extent to which teachers use this information to plan challenging lessons and promptly identify underachieving pupils is too varied.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has successfully addressed the key issues from the last inspection and improved standards and provision in ICT, and art and design. There is a very good team spirit among staff and governors and a shared vision for the future of the school. The school has been through an unsettled period of senior staff changes. Senior roles and responsibilities have also been restructured to make leaders and managers more accountable and to involve all staff in checking how well the school is doing. However, it is too early to see if these changes will be effective in restoring the previously high standard of pupils' work and outstanding achievement. Governors are passionate about their school and are clear about its strengths and areas for development. They balance support with an appropriate degree of challenge in holding staff to account for the school's performance. Although there are clear priorities for improvement, plans focus too

much on the action that staff will take and not enough on the expected impact of such action on raising standards and achievement. The school works closely with the local community and regularly seeks parents' views. Most parents think well of the school but around a fifth who responded to the inspection questionnaire raised various concerns, most of which were not borne out by the inspection evidence.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
--	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Nascot Wood Junior School, Nascot Wood Road, Watford, WD17 4YS

Thank you for making us so welcome when Mr Nelson and I visited your school earlier this week. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say about the school and your work. We are pleased you enjoy school and were impressed by your good behaviour and enthusiasm. We agree that your teachers take good care of you and that the school provides you with plenty of opportunities to take part in sport and other activities.

What your school does well

- Mr Holcombe and all your teachers are working hard to provide enjoyable and interesting things for you to do.
- You are developing into polite and friendly young people and are well prepared for secondary school.
- The standard of your work in Year 6 is high and especially in English and mathematics.
- Your school works well with outside organisations and provides interesting trips and visits.

There are a few things which would help your school to improve further

- When planning lessons, your teachers should be really clear about how the activities will help you all learn and make progress.
- Teachers should look at assessment information more closely to ensure that they are able to help anyone who is not doing as well as they could.
- When making plans for the future, the school should always consider how the proposed changes will improve your learning and progress.

Once again, thank you for your friendly welcome. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Smith

Lead Inspector