



Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117323
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290797
Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007
Reporting inspector Anne Kounnou

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Bridge Road West
School category	Community		Stevenage
Age range of pupils	3–7		Hertfordshire SG1 2NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01438 216070
Number on roll (school)	227	Fax number	01438 216171
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Steve Akers
		Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Grainger
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007	Inspection number 290797
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woolenwick is an average sized infant and nursery school serving a mixed catchment area that is typical of most schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is higher than average at around 20%. Around 9% of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. This figure is increasing year on year, and is now about average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than average at 10%.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage where the quality of education is good. As a result, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding throughout the school. The excellent new curriculum captures pupils' interests extremely well so that they have a lot of fun, both in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 classes. One parent reflected the views of the overwhelming majority of parents and wrote; 'My daughter loves coming to school and has made brilliant progress.' Pupils show a high level of responsibility for their age, and particularly enjoy the special 'planning time.' This is when they take part in a wide range of activities, indoors and outdoors, that they choose themselves. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They take great care of each other and create a calm and safe environment throughout the day. Staff and governors work diligently to ensure that pupils are cared for extremely well at school.

The school has won a number of awards that reflect the good leadership and management. This is a Healthy School where pupils know how to make healthy choices to improve their lifestyles. The school council plays a significant part in deciding how to improve the school further, and pupils make a really good contribution to the community by raising funds for charity and taking part in local events. They often make choices in their learning and work together successfully, developing key skills that will help them in their later life exceptionally well.

Throughout the school teaching and learning are good, mainly due to the high level of involvement that pupils have in their own learning. They know their own learning targets and make good assessments of their own success using a simple system that they all understand. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but do not always explain how pupils could improve their work further, or why they have done well.

Leadership and management are good. Senior staff have established excellent links with many partners that play a considerable role in pupils' outstanding personal development. Rigorous checks are made to ensure that governors and school leaders know what is working well and what could be even better. A relatively new system to check how well pupils are doing as they move through the school provides clear information for staff and governors. At the moment this is not used as well as it could be to check how well all the different groups of pupils are doing. There is outstanding capacity to improve the school even further because school leaders provide extremely clear guidance and support to staff to ensure that high expectations are maintained across the school. This has resulted in sustained improvement in the standards achieved over a number of years and an outstanding and innovative curriculum. The excellent support for new staff has been particularly valuable recently as there have been a lot of staff changes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use data already available in the school more effectively to compare the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school because they are interested in their work. When children start school, their attainment is lower than that expected for their age. Children do well in the nursery and reception classes reaching the expected levels in most areas of learning at the end of the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Pupils of all abilities do well because staff extend and challenge the most able and provide good support for those who have learning difficulties and disabilities. The small group of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do really well because staff have plenty of opportunities to extend their own skills so that they know how best to teach this small group. The school has successfully improved standards in speaking and listening, and reading, for all groups of pupils, and is now working hard to improve the quality of boys' writing. Boys do not reach the same good writing standards as girls. However, they make good progress building on the skills they learned before they started school at a good rate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are confident, have very positive attitudes, and behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around school. Attendance is above average, reflecting the fact that pupils enjoy school immensely. They respond positively to the outstanding curriculum. The wonderful paintings on display, created by a visiting author as pupils watched, are an excellent example of inspiration and spiritual excitement for pupils.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay healthy, for instance through balanced eating and participation in the variety of physical education activities on offer. They feel safe in school and know that there is someone they can turn to if in difficulty. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community through the school council, and to the wider community through raising money for charity. They acquire excellent team skills through various activities, clubs and community events, which gives them an excellent grounding for the next stage of schooling and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning have been maintained despite the high proportion of recent staff changes. Teaching assistants play an important role and where possible move with the pupils from one year to the next to maintain continuity. Teachers support one another really well and regularly reflect on the quality of their own work. Staff make particularly good use of resources to enliven lessons and ensure that children have fun whilst they are learning. Pupils are fully involved in assessing their own work, often using a traffic light system to show the teacher how well they think they have done. This information is used well to support and challenge pupils in lessons that follow. Marking is not consistent throughout the school and some marking comments are difficult for pupils to read. In Year 1, teachers help pupils understand how to improve their work by including symbols that represent a wish and a star in their marking. A star represents something the pupil has done well, and a wish something they could improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and covers a very wide range of learning activities and experiences. It is planned very well to meet the pupils' needs and offers them opportunities to make choices and decisions with confidence and flexibility. The Foundation Stage benefits from a stimulating environment and both indoor and outdoor activities that promote all aspects of their learning exceptionally well. Excellent attention is paid to developing basic skills and making the curriculum more creative and enjoyable through well-planned links between subjects, for example, pupils learn about healthy living through science and physical education. Pupils enjoy, and parents value, the excellent range of well-attended lunchtime and after-school activities such as football, dance, chess and gardening. The good number of educational visits and visitors further enliven the pupils' learning. Outstanding links with parents and other agencies add considerably to the excellent curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. The school has very thorough procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. One parent summed up the views of many others by writing; 'We were impressed by how quickly the school intervened to identify and provide for our child's needs.' The school provides excellent support for vulnerable pupils, those learning English as a new language and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Academic guidance is excellent. The progress of pupils is tracked closely using efficient information and communication technology based systems. Pupils know the learning targets that are set for them and there is a good new system

to check how much progress pupils are making towards these. Incidents of bullying are very rare but staff deal well with any that arise, one parent with a concern wrote; 'The problem was dealt with swiftly, discreetly and very effectively; we were taken seriously and kept informed of the measures taken to resolve the issue.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents say they are very impressed with the running of the school. One wrote; 'We have always felt that all staff are willing to listen and are very accessible.' Good leadership and management are underpinned by an extremely strong sense of teamwork among staff and governors. Governance is good because governors are well informed and regularly challenge senior staff to provide evidence to support their ideas. As a result, systems for checking the school are rigorous and school leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Data is checked regularly to ensure all pupils make good progress, but currently there is little comparison of how well each different group of pupils is doing. Innovation in the curriculum, led by senior staff, has already transformed pupils' attitudes to learning, especially for boys, and has resulted in outstanding personal development for all pupils. The school gives good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

18 January 2007

Dear Children

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School, Bridge Road, West Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2NU

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. You are all making good progress because this is a good school. The headteacher, governors and all the staff work extremely well together to try and make it even better. Lessons are good. You are developing really good skills to help you stay healthy, to help you make friends and to help you learn new things.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- Your behaviour is excellent in lessons and all around the school.
- You really enjoy learning because the activities are outstanding and you have a lot of fun.
- Staff and governors take tremendous care to ensure that you are safe at school.
- The headteacher and other senior teachers are especially good at introducing new ideas to make your school better.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- Staff and governors could use the information they have about your learning to check that all the different groups of children do as well as they can.
- Teachers could make sure that you understand everything they write in your books so that it helps you understand what you did really well, and how you can do even better. You could help the teachers by telling them if you don't understand what they have written.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou

Lead Inspector