

Inspection of a good school: Woolton Hill Junior School

Woolton Hill, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9XE

Inspection date: 31 January 2023

Outcome

Woolton Hill Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this happy village school. They love representing their school in sporting events such as cross-country, archery and netball. Pupils can take part in a wide range of enrichment activities, including guitar and library clubs, as well as residential trips and visits.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Leaders ensure that every pupil's 'light shines'. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to all that is on offer at the school. This includes the wide range of leadership opportunities, such as librarians and ambassadors.

Lessons are purposeful, and pupils work hard. They know the three school rules 'accept, behave, care' well. They follow instructions and are polite and respectful. Staff equip pupils with strategies which promote positive behaviours. They help pupils to manage their emotions well. Pupils take care of their school and the people in it. For example, they strive for their class to be the tidiest and win the 'Golden Brush' award.

Strong relationships permeate throughout the school so that pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare, and staff deal with any incidents quickly. Pupils say it is 'easy to make friends' at Woolton Hill.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, teachers and governors are highly ambitious for this school and the pupils who attend it. They have worked hard to improve the quality of education for pupils since the school federated in 2020. Leaders have redesigned subject content to ensure that pupils learn 'an irresistible curriculum'. They have identified the most important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn, year by year, subject by subject. Teachers plan 'hot tasks' to check that pupils have learned and remembered what they should. On the whole, they use this information well.

Pupils learn better in some foundation subjects than in others. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of education and are swift in bringing about necessary improvements. For example, leaders identified gaps in teachers' knowledge of how to best teach gymnastics. As a result, leaders adjusted the curriculum and are training staff. Leaders' targeted actions are improving teachers' subject knowledge as well as subject leaders' skills, especially in core subjects. However, currently, teachers' subject knowledge in foundation subjects remains variable. This affects how well pupils learn in some subjects, particularly for pupils with SEND. Leaders have created an inclusive school. They identify the needs of pupils with SEND early. Leaders are currently upskilling teachers so that they can best support pupils with SEND in lessons. This is not fully established yet, as sometimes there are limits placed on learning.

Leaders have introduced a well-structured phonics programme. This aligns with the federation infant school's programme and provides effective support as pupils move between the two schools. Pupils who are still learning to read fluently, and those that have fallen behind have focused daily phonics sessions. They read books that are carefully matched to their phonic knowledge. This helps these pupils to catch up and access the full curriculum. Leaders are now rightly focused on further developing pupils' love of reading.

Leaders' work to promote pupils' wider development is effective. Pupils benefit from a well-considered personal, social and health education curriculum. They learn how to be mentally and physically healthy. For example, they learn about drugs and how to identify risks. Pupils enjoy taking advantage of the school's healthy food tuck shop. They understand the school's values of wisdom, courage and respect. They make wise decisions in both their behaviour and learning.

Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Governors are astute. They hold leaders to account effectively. They have put rigorous systems in place to check what leaders tell them, including making good use of local authority advice.

Staff morale is high and there is a strong team spirit across the school. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance. Well-trained staff ask the right questions. They notice signs that may suggest a pupil is in need of help very quickly. Pupils trust that adults will listen to them if they have a worry. Strong communication and clear lines of accountability ensure that no pupil slips through the net at Woolton Hill. Governors actively ensure that safeguarding systems work as well as they possibly can. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to get the right help for the pupils in their care.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the curriculum content is new. Additionally, some teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge to teach these subjects consistently well. Senior leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the skills to best support their colleagues so that the curriculum is delivered well. This will mean pupils enjoy a curriculum that meets their needs more closely across a full range of subjects.
- Teachers do not always know how to adapt work or how best to support pupils with SEND. This is particularly the case in some foundation subjects. This hampers these pupils' ability to access and learn the full curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers always have high expectations for these pupils, together with the expertise to best support their learning in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116076
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256491
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	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Rolls
Headteacher	Paul Davies (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.wooltonhilljunior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher also leads St Thomas' Church of England Infant school in the village. The schools federated in September 2020 and have the same governing body.
- The executive headteacher took up post in April 2021. The deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2022. They work across the federation.
- The school currently uses one alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and four governors, including the chair. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. They spoke to subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited lessons

and looked at pupils' work. The lead inspector heard pupils read to an adult from the school. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also discussed safeguarding with those responsible for governance and with the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation of the school and school improvement plan.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, leaders and staff to discuss the wider development of pupils, behaviour, well-being and workload.
- Inspectors took into account parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. An inspector also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils. The inspectors spoke to many pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ian Elkington

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023