

# Wootton Lower School

Bedford Road, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9JT

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Strong leadership by the headteacher has resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement is good. In all year groups pupils make good progress.
- Standards at the end of Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics are rising steadily and are above expectations for the age.
- Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of personal safety.
- Pupils' attendance is above average.
- The governing body checks closely on the work of the school and sets challenging but appropriate targets for the headteacher.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teachers do not match the work closely enough to the learning needs of each pupil.
- Some teachers do not use supplementary questions often enough to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking.
- Pupils have yet to develop the skills of evaluating their own learning and commenting on their classmates' work.
- The outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not yet been fully developed as a natural extension of the classroom and to fully cover all areas of learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and attended an assembly. They heard some pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's parental surveys and 26 questionnaires returned by members of staff in making their judgements.

## Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Buckingham	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. None are currently at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority and other eligible groups) is below average.
- The headteacher was appointed for the start of the summer term 2011. Two existing members of staff took on senior leadership roles from the start of the autumn term 2013.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by making certain that all teachers:
  - closely match the work to the needs and ability of the different groups of pupils
  - make better use of supplementary questions to challenge and consolidate pupils' understanding
  - provide pupils with more opportunities to assess their own learning and to evaluate their classmates' work.
- Maximise the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage dedicated outdoor area to provide wider learning opportunities for children.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the Reception classes with skills and knowledge similar to those expected for their age. They settle quickly and grow in confidence in a safe and secure environment. This is because the fostering of good relationships between adults and the children and between the children themselves is a priority.
- Children make good progress in their learning because the activities are well planned. Their progress through the year is checked carefully and support is provided when it is needed. By the end of the year the large majority reach and some exceed the expected levels for a typical five year old child in all areas of learning.
- The children enjoy learning in the spacious classrooms which are well organised. However, the use of the outdoor area, although used well to promote the children's social and physical skills, has not as yet been fully developed to enhance children's skills in the other areas of learning. Nevertheless, outcomes at the end of the Reception class have risen steadily over the last few years.
- Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The more-able pupils are being suitably challenged. The last two years has seen a marked improvement in standards.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and using the school library. They read with fluency and where appropriate use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to read unfamiliar words. Pupils understand the use of dictionaries to find the meaning of words and to help them with their spelling. Pupils in Year 1 performed well when compared to national expectations in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1.
- Pupils' writing skills are developing well. They write for a range of purposes and in different styles. They draft out their work and present it neatly. Older pupils use adjectives and sometimes similes to bring their writing to life.
- In mathematics, pupils have a secure understanding of number and are given opportunities to investigate and to solve problems. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils were asked to find out how many different types of sandwiches could be made using different combinations of fillings. The pupils responded positively to the task and demonstrated a good attitude to learning.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because the school has used this additional funding well to provide additional support staff and further support for literacy and numeracy. In 2013, pupils in Year 4, generating the additional funding, reached broadly similar standards to their peers in writing and mathematics and made a similar rate of progress. Performance information shows that pupils entitled to pupil premium in Years 2 made slightly better progress than the others in reading and writing. The school is monitoring their performance closely to ensure that any gap in their performance in mathematics closes rapidly.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than their peers nationally. Their progress is checked regularly and additional support is provided to move learning on when necessary.

- Pupils enjoy taking part in sporting activities and have a good understanding of healthy living. The primary school sports funding has been allocated appropriately including to support the development of football and sporting links with other schools.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- Most of the teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching. As a result, pupils are making good progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. There is no inadequate teaching.
- Teachers strive to ensure that all pupils, including potentially vulnerable pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities as other pupils.
- Most lessons are well planned with the work pitched at the right level across the full range of ability. However, in some lessons this is not the case and for some the work is too hard and for others too easy. As a result, they do not make rapid progress in that lesson.
- Nearly all lessons proceed at a quick pace. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and encourage them to share their ideas with each other and with the adults. Most use questioning strategies skilfully building on pupils' earlier learning, but at times, some teachers do not ask supplementary questions to clarify pupils' ideas, challenge their thinking and to extend and consolidate their learning. Teaching assistants support group work effectively and help the pupils to make good progress.
- During and at the end of lessons some teachers regularly ask pupils how well they think they are doing but this has yet to become routine in all classes. There is limited evidence in the pupils' books of them evaluating their own work or that of their classmates. The marking of pupils' work is developing well with some good examples of marking which help pupils towards their targets.
- Teachers encourage pupils to read on a regular basis and encourage them to take their books home to read with their parents. As a result, pupils are developing their reading skills well.
- Teachers are successfully raising the expectations of all pupils, including the more able, to strive to reach higher standards. They skilfully bring the pupils' learning in different subjects together through carefully thought out topics or themes and provide opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. As a result, pupils have a positive attitude, are keen to learn and make good progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' good and sometimes exemplary behaviour, together with their positive attitudes to learning help them to make good progress. Their attendance has improved steadily and is now above average for primary schools. This is because pupils enjoy coming to school and they find the lessons are more interesting.
- Lessons are very rarely interrupted by incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are polite and routinely demonstrate good manners as they move around the school. Most generally respond quickly to instructions.
- Pupils say that all the pupils get on well together. There have been no bullying incidents, such as name-calling, fighting, racial, religious or cyber-bullying. They are confident that if an incident

occurred, it would be dealt with quickly and fairly.

- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe and have a good understanding of potential dangers, for example when using computers to access the internet, around the school or when approached by strangers.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and is working effectively with governors, senior leaders and staff to bring about improvements. In the last two years teaching has improved and standards throughout the school have risen steadily. The school is well placed to improve further.
- The headteacher sets high expectations. He monitors and checks on pupils' progress regularly and sets the teachers challenging targets. Teachers are asked to explain if any pupil is not on track to achieve their individual targets and what the teacher intends to do about it. This information is used by the governing body when reviewing staff salaries.
- There is a positive attitude amongst staff. All staff are keen to see the school move forward. They have attended courses and whole staff training sessions to improve their professional skills.
- As part of the headteacher's program to ensure continuity of leadership provision by staff development, two established members of staff have recently undertaken additional responsibilities as senior leaders. They are developing these roles well and know what has to be done to secure further improvement. This includes supporting their colleagues to consistently teach well and contributing to the long term development of the school.
- In all classes, there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. All subjects of the national curriculum are taught and, where possible, brought together through a theme or topic approach. Pupils are responsive to this approach and speak enthusiastically about their topics.
- The wide range of activities promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example by playing a musical instrument, undertaking various responsibilities such as being members of the school council, taking part in educational visits and cultivating small raised gardens which were constructed by pupils from a local upper school.
- Parents are generally pleased with their child's education. The school's questionnaire returns over the last few years show an increasing level of satisfaction.
- In accordance with the local authority policy officers have monitored the school's performance. As the school has demonstrated good outcomes there has been minimal additional support. The additional support has been effective in developing the governing body and enhancing the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors undertake regular training and are effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. They are allocated to different committees and asked to undertake areas of responsibility based on an audit of their skills. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this knowledge well to set challenging yet realistic targets. The headteacher's detailed reports give governors a good understanding of

the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing compared with similar schools and against national data. Governors ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted and discriminatory practices are not tolerated. They are fully involved in planning the future development of the school and monitor the school's progress against the school development plan, which is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. Following the review of the school's Appraisal Policy, governors know where teaching is good. They have a good understanding of how targets are set for teachers to improve and the process for rewarding good teaching. The governing body makes sure that pupil premium funding is being spent wisely and that the impact of the expenditure on pupils' progress is checked. There are suitable plans being considered for the spending of the Primary Sports funding and processes are in place to monitor the expenditure. The governing body makes sure the school meets requirements for safeguarding pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109494
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford Borough
<b>Inspection number</b>	425346

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	291
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Wheeler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Tavener
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 768239
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