

Woolaston Primary School

Netherend, Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6PH

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There has been a period of unsettled staffing that has slowed pupils' progress. Teaching, learning and assessment are not good enough. Teachers' expectations are too low, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The governors have not secured a strategic leadership structure, which limits the capacity for improvement.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making as much progress as others in the school and nationally. Leaders have planned some individual support but have not considered the common barriers to these pupils learning in a better way.
- Boys are not making as much progress as girls in many subjects. Teaching is not adapted to suit their needs, especially for boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with lower ability.
- Children in Reception are not stretched and challenged effectively. Consequently, too few are exceeding in the more academic subjects, such as writing and number.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write extensively across subjects in the wider curriculum. This limits their application of skills, knowledge and understanding of literacy.
- Teachers do not check on the books that older pupils in key stage 2 read in their free time. Pupils do not have opportunities to deepen their thinking and comprehension beyond the guided reading sessions.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher is improving pupils' progress through clear accountability structures.
- Most pupils are ready to learn and engage with their teachers well.
- The SEND coordinator provides strong support to pupils with SEND so that they can make good progress.
- Pupils attend school regularly because of the clear messages given to parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Governors must ensure that there is a strategic leadership structure so that weaknesses can be eliminated swiftly.
- Leaders must ensure that:
 - the common barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils are identified accurately so that teachers can support them with precise actions to improve their learning
 - teaching in the early years supports more children exceeding in their early learning goals, especially in reading, writing and number.
- Leaders need to improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that boys, especially those with SEND and of lower ability, achieve well and make strong progress
 - providing opportunities for pupils to write more extensively in a range of subjects
 - consolidating the reading skills of pupils so that they can comprehend texts and understand inferences better
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can achieve, particularly the most able pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The deputy headteacher became the acting headteacher in February 2019. She is steadfast and resilient in her approach to the new role and pupils' achievements are improving slowly. She has established clear guidelines for the accountability of staff to ensure that standards improve. Other leadership roles in the school are underdeveloped.
- The local authority appointed a local, experienced headteacher to support the acting headteacher strategically. The local authority performance adviser's visits provide regular and effective monitoring that is moving learning forward incrementally.
- Governors meet regularly with the acting headteacher and their visits align with the school's improvement plan actions. Governors provide appropriate challenge, but the impact is minimal so far because of the newness of these initiatives.
- The local authority performance adviser is supporting the subject leader of English. There have been successes in phonics, with Year 1 achieving 96% in the phonics screening checks.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school is not analytical enough. The low achievement of boys was not recognised and so their progress remains poor.
- Leaders have not spent pupil premium funding efficiently in the past and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils have not made strong progress.
- The SEND coordinator provides individual support for pupils and has trained teaching assistants in skilful teaching practices. However, teachers do not receive adequate training to help pupils with SEND in literacy work. There is greater success in mathematics.
- The acting headteacher has reviewed the school's behaviour policy. However, the policy does not specify how adults should implement the policy, so it is only partially successful currently. There is no analysis of logged behaviour incidents, so some aspects of poor behaviour continue.
- Staff training is haphazard because improvement plans are not precise and strategic. The impact of training is not evaluated. Consequently, governors are unable to judge the effectiveness of actions on raising standards.
- The curriculum is weak because core subjects do not provide pupils with the skills to investigate the wider curriculum in depth. Topic work, which includes subjects such as history and geography, provides pupils with a superficial and limited understanding. In contrast, art is a strength of the school. The specialist art teacher develops pupils' abilities skilfully. One pupil is expected to exhibit his work in the National Gallery as a result.
- Staff provide pupils with a range of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities. The sport premium has enabled pupils to try archery and other more unusual sports. Pupils attending the gardening club have enhanced the school environment impressively and won national competitions. While the inspection was taking place, pupils in key stage 1 listened to a visiting author.

- Pupils receive an appropriate personal, social, health and economic education through assemblies and lessons. They are gaining a clear understanding of fundamental British values. The ethos of the school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and is developing pupils as responsible citizens of the future.

Governance of the school

- Many governors are relatively new to their roles. They are keen to be as effective as possible in improving pupils' progress. To this end, a review of governance took place in September 2018. Governors are improving their practice as a result.
- Governors have dealt with many unexpected and turbulent staffing issues with careful and sensitive consideration. As a result, staff morale, in the main, has stayed positive and focused on improving pupil progress.
- Governors are visiting the school to monitor aspects of the school's improvement plan, such as the work done to improve reading. Governors ask challenging questions of staff and have high expectations. The newness of these initiatives means that there is little impact currently, but the intentions are sound.
- Governors' oversight of additional funding has not led to improvements in achievement of disadvantaged pupils yet.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Administrative records are in order and staff checks for safer recruitment are stringent.
- The acting headteacher responds immediately and efficiently to any concerns raised.
- Most pupils feel safe and secure in school. The occasional unruly behaviour by a few pupils is disturbing for younger pupils. Leaders are aware of this and have changed the behaviour policy to manage this. The implementation of the policy is in its infancy so is not yet entirely effective.
- Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support the more vulnerable pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Because the school's subject planning is not precise, teachers are not planning efficiently for pupils. On too many occasions, planning does not meet pupils' learning needs, especially boys with lower ability.
- Teaching has not improved reading effectively. Some short-term measures have started to tackle some weaknesses, but teachers fail to check the reading ability of older pupils and provide guidance on reading books. This means that pupils' reading ability is not supported or challenged well enough.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving slowly. Some teachers are following the guidance provided by the SEND coordinator. This helps both pupils with SEND and

those with lower ability. Some pupils are making better progress as a result. However, this is not a consistent feature across the school.

- A major feature of the literacy policy is the promotion of spoken English, but teachers are not developing this effectively. Pupils do not have adequate opportunities to articulate their learning. This limits their understanding and adds to their weaker progress over time.
- The acting headteacher has introduced a new marking policy to make teacher workload more balanced. As yet, teachers are not applying this consistently across the school, so some pupils' learning fails to develop.
- Pupils' presentation of work is a strength. Leaders introduced a policy for handwriting some years ago and pupils follow it well. Their work from Reception to Year 6 is legible and neat.
- Pupils and teachers have good relationships. They are respectful of each other so there is an appropriate platform for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils feel that bullying is relatively rare and dealt with effectively. However, there is a minority of pupils, especially among younger key stage 2 pupils, who spoke of areas in the playground where they feel unsafe because supervision by adults is lacking.
- Leaders have not analysed the bullying logs sufficiently. Because of this they do not react proactively to any issues of concern and problems persist.
- Pupils take pride in their work and present it with care.
- Pupils receive their personal, social, health and economic education through assemblies and other learning. Pupils know about the fundamental British values in age-appropriate ways. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of circumstances, such as in a fire, in water and online. External speakers, such as police community support officers, come to the school to support this learning.
- Pupils participate in the daily mile, which keeps them healthy. Within the science curriculum, pupils are learning about having healthy hearts and the dangers of over-exposure to the sun.
- Specialist teachers in French, art and physical education (PE) enrich the learning of pupils in these subjects.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Although most pupils behave well and respond appropriately, there is weaker behaviour in Year 5. This disturbs the Year 3 class next door. The unruliness of a few causes stress among the younger pupils. At times, the poor behaviour of the older pupils spills over into the playground. Pupils spoke of 'real fights' which happen. The acting headteacher has introduced a new behaviour policy to ameliorate this situation. However, the lack of analysis of behaviour logs, and insufficient supervision in certain areas of the school, limits the impact of actions. This reflects the current limited capacity of leadership within the school and not a lack of determination to tackle weaknesses.
- Attendance is improving and is above last year's national figure. The school takes effective action, which is bespoke to the pupils' needs, to address persistent absence. Some pupils have complex medical or mental health needs, and staff work well with outside agencies in these cases.
- There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils in key stage 1 are making better progress this year because of the concerted actions of the teaching staff to make sure that phonics teaching supports better reading and writing.
- Pupils' mathematics skills are improving throughout the school. Attainment is above the national average in key stage 1 this year and progress at key stage 2 is strong.
- Although attainment in key stage 2 is close to the national average and in key stage 1 is above it, there are fewer pupils than the national average exceeding and gaining greater depth in any subject at key stages 1 and 2. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and planning is not meeting the needs of the most able.
- Boys, particularly those with lower ability and SEND, are not making strong progress in literacy. Teachers do not focus on their needs well enough.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write extensively across the curriculum. They rely too heavily on checklists. Teachers are not helping pupils' long-term memory skills and recall.
- Disadvantaged pupils lag behind their peers in their learning. Leaders have not evaluated actions effectively to see what works and what doesn't work when supporting these pupils. Current leaders and governors are focusing on this more carefully, but it is too soon to measure any impact.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years leader has effective systems for children who transfer from Nursery provision. Teachers know the ability level and individual needs of the children well but do not use this information proficiently.
- Most children enter Reception with skills that are typical for their age. Staff in Reception are not assessing children's individual progress effectively. As a result, not enough children are exceeding at a good level of development. The least able children

are not receiving teaching that helps them catch up in reading, writing and numeracy. This means that children's progress is limited by ineffective teaching.

- Weak play and exploration activities prevent children from applying their letters and sounds knowledge across the curriculum. Careful consideration of what is important to progress learning within a given timeframe is not apparent. This is hampering children from making rapid progress in reading and writing. Equally, too much of the number work involves sticking and pasting of number sequences. This helps with children's counting but not their writing in number sentences.
- Academic expectations are too low. Planning is not precise enough regarding children's improvements.
- Teachers use an online tool to share children's learning with parents, but this is not reaching all parents successfully. Staff have not looked closely at the reasons for this, so the problem persists. Engagement with parents and sharing learning from home as well as school takes place. However, teachers are not using this well enough to promote further learning.
- Children respond well to adults. They take responsibility for their actions eagerly. They are keen to learn. Children show resilience and tenacity over an extended time when allowed to do so.
- Children's personal and social development is strong because teachers know the children well. Activities are set up where children can integrate, learn to share and take turns without undue fuss and bother.
- Teachers have created a rich learning environment to engage children, inside and outside the school buildings. However, there are missed opportunities for teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Children are safe, and the early years safeguarding practices are robust.

School details

Unique reference number	115559
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10091030

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Woodley
Acting Headteacher	Emma Gomersall
Telephone number	01594 529 270
Website	www.woolastonprimary.co.uk/
Email address	admin@woolaston.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2013

Information about this school

- Woolaston Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The acting headteacher was appointed in February 2019.
- The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is above the national average but the proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The school had a bout of norovirus in the week before the inspection. There were fewer staff and pupils in school as a result. Staff were covering for colleagues who were absent.
- Most Year 6 pupils were visiting the local secondary school as part of their transition process on the two days of the inspection. Children from the on-site Nursery were in school for part of the afternoon on day 1 of the inspection. On the second day of the inspection, pupils spent the day with the class teacher for next year. An author visited the school on the afternoon of the second day and spoke with pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with the acting headteacher and other teachers.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- An inspector talked with a group of pupils from key stage 2, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, the subject lead for English and members of the governing body. A telephone call was made to the local authority performance adviser.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated, including those relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to and 25 comments in the online Parent View survey, the 27 responses to the pupil survey and the 13 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

Gareth Simons

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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