

Inspection of Woburn Lower School

Bedford Street, Woburn, Bedfordshire MK17 9QL

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils believe Woburn Lower School is a special place. They are immensely proud to be part of a learning community that has occupied the school's historic buildings for over 400 years. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning permeates the school. Their positive attitudes, along with adults' high expectations, result in most pupils achieving very well.

Pupils regard the school's small size as a strength. They love the way everyone gets to know each other well. This includes the adults. The strong bonds that are formed between adults and pupils mean that pupils feel safe and happy at school.

Adults model the behaviour they expect from pupils. They establish clear routines and high expectations from the moment children join the Reception class. These set the foundations for excellent behaviour as pupils move through the school. If pupils' enthusiasm leads them to forget the expectations, a gentle reminder gets them back on track.

Pupils appreciate the many ways in which people are different. They value and respect diversity. The range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community and develop their character is impressive. Roles such as house captains, ambassadors and school councillors enable pupils to develop leadership skills and responsibility from an early age.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and ambitious. It is carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. In most subjects, the curriculum identifies the key learning for each year group. The curriculum sets out a logical sequence for the teaching, so that pupils build up deep and detailed knowledge over time. Overall, pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics.

In a small number of subjects, the school has not yet identified what pupils should learn with enough precision. The curriculum in these subjects does not clearly define the order in which pupils should learn key knowledge. This means that pupils do not build their understanding of the subject over time. As a result, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as the school would like them to.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils read widely and often. They listen attentively to the stories adults share with them. Early reading is taught effectively through daily phonics lessons. These start as soon as children join the Reception class. Teachers identify any pupils who need extra help early. Pupils get tailored support so that they can progress. Consequently, most pupils quickly become competent and keen readers.

Teachers are confident about the subjects they teach. They use questioning skilfully to check what pupils know. If misconceptions arise, teachers address these promptly

and adjust their teaching if necessary. They present new concepts clearly and use a range of methods to make learning memorable and fun. These include songs, games and drama. In French, for example, children in the Reception class learn to name parts of the body by singing 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes' in French. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils act out the nativity story in French.

Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Their classrooms are calm spaces where learning is not disrupted. The dining room is a sociable place. Older pupils help younger pupils with their lunches. Pupils' positive attitudes and strong relationships mean they attend school regularly. The school's strong links with families help it to tackle any attendance issues that arise.

There is a robust system for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school ensures these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff adapt resources or provide pupils with additional support. This enables many pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school's programme for pupils' personal development is extensive. A wide range of clubs is available to all pupils. Some, such as comic club, are run by the pupils. Trips and visitors enhance the curriculum. For example, a 'faith tour' of places of worship supplements pupils' learning about world religions. The school has strong links with the local community. Pupils relish their visits to the school allotment or working as young curators for the heritage museum next door.

Pastoral care is a priority. The school intervenes swiftly to nurture and support vulnerable pupils. This helps them become resilient, confident learners. Staff well-being is equally highly valued. Leaders, including the governing body, ensure staff get the training and support they need to deliver the curriculum. Governors are committed to leaders' ambitious vision. They provide strong oversight, support and challenge so that the vision is realised. Staff and parents have an extremely positive view of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum plans are not sufficiently precise. They do not identify endpoints for pupils, nor do they set out the sequence of learning pupils will follow to reach those endpoints. As a result, pupils do not learn as well in these subjects as the school would like them to. The school should ensure that the curriculum in these subjects precisely sets out the knowledge pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it, so that all pupils reach the endpoints the school has identified for them.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109493
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10288422
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jennifer Kearney
Headteacher	Paula Black
Website	www.woburn-lower-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 December 2010

Information about this school

- There have been three changes of headteacher since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and governors, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages (MFL). For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. She also looked at curriculum plans and a sample of pupils' work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires, as well as emails from parents. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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