

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115704
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379130
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2012
Lead inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Butler
Headteacher	Gordon Soutar
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
School address	Church Road North Woodchester Stroud GL5 5PD
Telephone number	01453 872476
Fax number	01453 873062
Email address	admin@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Carnaghan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector saw 13 lessons over five hours, taught by six teachers. He met with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. He observed the school's work, and looked at the school's policies, assessments and records as well as questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 92 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Woodchester is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are of a White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average. The school has a higher than average turnover of pupils. The on-site Nursery is not managed by the school governing body and was not inspected on this occasion. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and thrive in a safe, happy environment and their attainment regularly exceeds the national average. The school is not outstanding because not enough teaching is yet outstanding.
- Children settle rapidly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. They quickly develop important skills; their good personal development is a cornerstone of the school's positive ethos. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good because teaching is good and pupils are receptive learners. Assessment information is used to ensure there are no achievement gaps between subjects and to identify and help pupils in danger of falling behind. All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled and have special educational needs, achieve well.
- Teachers display high expectations and, from the Reception class on, children learn to work independently and in collaboration with their friends. Teachers make learning enjoyable so that pupils are enthused and they question them perceptively. Pupils are managed with tact and courtesy and they respond in kind, so classrooms are civilised environments. In some lessons, there are too few deadlines set and learning slows. Marking is helpful, but the quality and use of targets are inconsistent. Literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted and encouraged as much in different subjects as they could be.
- Good behaviour is the norm; pupils report feeling safe and happy at school. Bullying, in all its forms, is almost unknown; rare incidents of bullying and unacceptable behaviour are firmly dealt with.
- Staff share with the headteacher and governing body a commitment to improve. Assessment information is used to promote consistently good progress, particularly through the effective leadership of teaching and management of performance. Strong links with parents and carers promote pupils' well-being. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school, almost all reporting that they would recommend it to another family.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of lessons that are outstanding by ensuring that there are strict deadlines that encourage good pace and that pupils' targets are fully used to promote their learning.
- Develop the curriculum so that all subjects make a full contribution to the development of pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make better progress than all pupils nationally because good teaching maintains a strong focus on learning and develops an understanding of important skills in different subjects. This starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children make good gains across all the main areas of learning; in this way, they are well prepared for the National Curriculum. The well-managed transition into Year 1 and effective teaching ensure that good progress continues in KeyStage1. Consistently good teaching ensures this good progress is maintained across Key Stage 2. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children make good progress. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average.

The happy combination of enthusiastic teaching and pupils' love of learning plays a major part in this positive picture. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils really enjoyed their teacher's lively exposition of how to build a feeling of tension in their writing. She showed good examples from music and film before enthusiastically elucidating the most appropriate writing techniques. By the time pupils set out on their tasks, their eagerness was almost boundless and even the youngest in the class produced exciting and coherent narratives that fully met the lesson's objectives.

The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to develop a love of books and reading. Phonics teaching (the reading method involving letter and sound recognition) enables pupils to quickly grasp the skills required for independent reading. All ages enjoy reading books of varied types, showing confidence and good fluency; attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is above average.

Teachers and teaching assistants plan together carefully to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In consequence, these and other pupils benefit from precisely targeted interventions that mirror the work of the whole class, so they receive their full curriculum entitlement. Careful assessment shows the positive impact of this assistance, so that all groups of pupils can and do achieve well.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers correctly believe that their children are well taught and pupils report that they enjoy lessons. Teaching is good overall, with some outstanding elements. Pupils are very receptive learners; they work well solo, in pairs and in groups, furthering their social development. Inappropriate behaviour very rarely

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disturbs the good classroom atmosphere. Teachers manage pupils with care, developing excellent relationships. They introduce fascinating ideas that encourage deeper reflection, developing pupils' spiritual understanding. The curriculum and lessons are planned to provide interesting experiences and meet the broad range of pupils' needs; teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to work both together and independently. Resources are often imaginatively selected to engage pupils, such as when sports equipment was introduced into the classroom to prompt Year 6 pupils' French conversation about favourite hobbies.

Teachers are very enthusiastic and show an infectious love of learning. This motivates pupils and fires their curiosity. For example, pupils in an outstanding Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson enjoyed writing numbers in the air, then attempting to trace their mirror image. This raised interesting questions that led seamlessly into a consideration of shapes and their reflected images, using the interactive whiteboard. The teacher set challenging tasks on this topic, then furthered pupils' growing understanding in the excellent closing part of the lesson, where learning was extended so that pupils were able to write mirror images of their first names.

The school gathers good assessment information; it uses this to identify where individuals' learning may be faltering. Carefully planned interventions, well delivered by appropriately qualified teaching assistants, are put in place to boost these pupils' progress so many are soon able to return to whole-class teaching. Marking is generally good and provides helpful advice. However, target setting is inconsistent. Some targets are too generalised to be helpful to individuals; others may not be checked up on sufficiently. Within a pattern of good teaching, some parts of lessons can run too slowly. Pupils are sometimes not given deadlines for tasks so that, although they work hard, their pace of learning slows and they make less progress than they are capable of.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were almost unanimous in their views that behaviour is good and lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour. Their assertions are correct. Pupils show highly positive attitudes to learning and are, typically, courteous and respectful to staff and one another. This makes a significant contribution to a safe, calm and well-ordered school and disruptions to learning are unusual. Lessons are characterised by a collaborative approach to learning and pupils happily work in teams, pairs or independently, as required. This means learning usually proceeds smoothly. Occasionally, where the pace of the lesson declines, pupils become too talkative and need calming down.

Pupils report that they feel happy and safe in school. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Pupils report that bullying of all kinds, including cyber-bullying, is very rare and the vast majority believe the school deals with any occurrences most effectively. For the few who find difficulty in conforming to Woodchester's high behavioural expectations, the school employs relevant strategies, including calling on outside agencies for their expertise. These actions are generally most effective in resolving the situation.

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Leadership and management

Leaders and managers, the governing body and staff share high expectations and a desire for improvement. School leaders and the governing body monitor the school independently of one another, providing an accurate picture of progress made towards meeting its goals. School leaders use assessment information well to provide clarity on the progress of individual pupils. Focused actions to help pupils facing barriers to learning are usually effective, so that there is equality of opportunity for all and no discrimination. School leaders monitor teaching carefully. They promote good practice effectively so that there is a consistency to teaching. For example, lessons are almost universally thoroughly planned to provide challenge to pupils of all abilities and teaching assistants are consistently well deployed.

Members of the governing body check on the school systematically, using both assessment data and personal observations of classes in action to inform their views. The quality of this information enables them to provide constructive, helpful challenges to the school, particularly as it plans for the future. Governors and school leaders are rigorous in monitoring safeguarding. The school's safeguarding practices and procedures are relevant and up to date, fully meeting requirements.

The school has thoroughly addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. It has consolidated above average attainment and good achievement. A shared approach to setting priorities for the future and to planning ensures staff and the governing body work together cohesively to develop the school. Capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The curriculum is balanced and well organised. Pupils enthuse about 'focus fortnights' where they tackle interesting topics such as 'Under the sea' in detail. These experiences are often combined with interesting trips, such as a mock Second World War evacuation on a steam train. However, the school recognises that it has not done enough to promote the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all the subjects of the curriculum.

School assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect and ask profound questions. One, on the theme of humility, considered the life of Isaac Newton and his thought-provoking assertion that he was 'standing on the shoulders of giants'. Cultural development is strong; the school takes numerous opportunities to open pupils' eyes to culture; for example, all Key Stage 2 pupils are involved in an annual production of a Shakespeare play.

Parents rightly feel fully involved with school life. Information flows easily from school to home and vice versa. Relationships with the school are excellent; many parents and carers spoke and wrote about the approachability of staff, especially the headteacher. The school is most welcoming. One parent typically wrote of how the school helped her daughter settle in: 'She is shy and found the new environment daunting. Her teacher visited us at home and gave her lots of support in class and she now skips to school.'

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodchester Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School, Stroud GL5 5PD

Many thanks for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. I very much enjoyed meeting and talking to you and was pleased to hear that you are happy at school. I congratulate you on your good behaviour.

Woodchester Primary is a good school. You make good progress because you are well taught and are so keen to learn. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is above the average for boys and girls of this age. Teachers keep you safe and I was pleased to discover how rare bullying is and how well it is dealt with.

The headteacher, his team of staff and the governing body work well together to keep up the quality of teaching and learning and to plan for the future.

To continue improving, I am asking the school to do two things.

- Make sure all lessons run at a good pace and that your targets are fully used to help you make progress.
- Promote your literacy and numeracy skills in all the subjects that are taught, not just in English and mathematics.

You can help the school continue to improve by maintaining your very good behaviour and attitudes.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan
Lead inspector

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