

Woodmancote School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115576
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357783
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Musgrave
Headteacher	Gary Tucker
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons led by 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and the governors. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, samples of pupils' work, the school's monitoring of the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 138 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from school staff and the pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The degree to which improvements have been made in achievement in mathematics and writing, especially for boys.
- How far school leaders and members of the governing body probe the school's performance and drive improvement.
- The success of the school's promotion of community cohesion, including the development of pupils' understanding of different cultures. The effectiveness of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics.

Information about the school

Woodmancote School is larger than most primary schools. Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the national average. Several of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. Some of these children attend the school-managed before and after school provision. This was inspected by the team. Other year groups work in mixed-age classes or are set by ability for much of their English and mathematics work.

There has been considerable reorganisation of staffing recently, including among the senior leadership team. There are several new members of the governing body. The headteacher was absent for a period before the inspection.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Woodmancote School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. After a period when the achievement of pupils slowed, their progress is now improving because of a more effective focus on their needs in lessons. Whilst teaching quality is satisfactory, it too is improving. Some outstanding teaching was observed in music, which is a notable curriculum strength. Good teaching and learning was observed across the school. Pupils' behaviour, the relationships they form with others, their enjoyment of school and their attendance are all good.

School leaders and members of the governing body recognise that pupils' attainment is not yet high enough. Until recently, the tracking of progress was not sharp enough to detect underachievement quickly enough and so pupils' attainment, whilst above average, did not reach its peak. Observations in lessons and the examination of pupils' books show that this is being addressed successfully. Boys, for example, are now targeted more accurately and their progress is being monitored more regularly. They achieve as well as girls in most lessons.

There are still some groups who are not challenged sufficiently, especially the more able. Sometimes, the teaching approach does not build on their good learning habits and their enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, their work. School monitoring and evaluation of the quality of lessons and the degree of challenging work provided is being strengthened and is becoming a useful tool for school improvement. However, several of the senior leaders have had little opportunity to monitor and evaluate the school's successes and weaknesses, which has meant most evaluation of the school's work is based on a limited range of evidence.

The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn the necessary skills and knowledge in all subjects. Its greatest shortcoming is provision in information and communication technology (ICT) which is not yet extended across all subjects sufficiently. In part, this is due to past problems with hardware, and school leaders have well-expressed priorities for the improvement of the subject. In contrast, curriculum provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

The governing body has ensured the school maintains up-to-date policies which are regularly reviewed and renewed. Procedures to ensure these policies are followed are satisfactory, although sometimes records to show the actions taken do not always cover all the responses made. Thus, whilst supportive and useful, care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good.

The school is making appropriate improvements and senior leaders recognise that this can be accelerated by improved self-evaluation. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, even during the period of staff reorganisation

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and change. It has the capacity to maintain its improvement because priorities are shared and agreed by all staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics by
 - making their targets more challenging, especially for the more able
 - using the information from assessment more rigorously to evaluate how well pupils are progressing.
- Strengthen the quality of monitoring and evaluation by
 - giving all senior leaders regular opportunities to make formal observations of learning
 - ensuring members of the governing body make use of key data in making rigorous checks of how well the school is performing
 - ensuring the strengths in teaching and learning are shared across the school.
- Improve provision in ICT so that it effectively assists pupils to develop the necessary skills and knowledge in all subjects, especially mathematics and writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start Reception with very well formed skills and knowledge that will assist their early learning. By the end of Reception, they reach well above average scores in all six areas. This sets a marker for their potential as high achievers in Years 1 to 6. Observation in lessons, allied to the investigation of data about pupils' progress, suggests that the slower progress shown during the last two years is being tackled successfully. This is not yet consistent, however. In the best lessons, such as a Year 1/2 mathematics session observed, pupils are set challenging targets repeatedly, urged to work at a very brisk pace and have ample opportunities to evaluate their own learning and what they need to do next to improve. This spurs them to make good progress and to reach even higher attainment levels. Their enjoyment of learning is doubled because they are not fazed by the challenge and are keen to show their prowess as learners. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils' mental agility with complicated mathematical sums such as 360 divided by 0.8 was very impressive. Such good features are not yet seen in every lesson.

There has been an improvement recently in the progress of boys. The Forest School initiative in Reception has been particularly effective in helping the younger boys adopt a purposeful, enquiring approach to their learning. This is being continued more successfully in Years 1 to 6 than in the past. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given the necessary support, including the accurate planning of their next steps, which enables them to make satisfactory progress as well.

Although some parents, carers and their children are concerned about safety in school, behaviour in lessons, at break and at other times is good. There is some fidgeting sometimes in lessons because pupils' learning is not challenging enough. The management of behaviour, including the anti-bullying strategy, is effective in establishing a settled, harmonious community of pupils. The good enjoyment of school is reflected in pupils' regular and punctual attendance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development is good because pupils relate well to others, know right from wrong and have useful opportunities to reflect on the special nature of things around them. Because attainment is above average and also because pupils are capable of effective team work and independent learning, they develop good skills to assist them in the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The use of assessment to support learning is based on sound procedures and a secure system to track pupils' progress. There is some inconsistency in practice in the classrooms to enable pupils to self-evaluate their work and to discuss with other pupils and their teacher the progress they are making and necessary next steps in learning. The degree of rigour in investigating trends in progress amongst different ability groups and according to age is rising but it is not yet robust enough. This is recognised by senior leaders who are determined to make better use of such evidence.

Provision in the classroom is sometimes affected by this inconsistency in the use of assessment information and so the work is not always challenging enough. There is, however, good practice to share. It is not very often, for example, that in inspectors' observations of music lessons, the work is adjusted for each ability group so that the pupils maximise their achievement. This happens at Woodmancote, where a Year 5/6

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class worked to improve their own singing and notation skills with very good levels of musical creativity. They achieved highly in this lesson.

Guidance to enable all pupils to benefit from their learning is successful. The support of vulnerable pupils and those with barriers to learning is effective in helping them settle to school and work hard. The school has formed good partnerships with outside agencies to support this work. The written records of actions taken to support and encourage pupils' better learning do not always include full details of the actions and their outcomes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The procedures, systems and teams necessary for the effective embedding of ambition and driving improvement have been put in place. In some cases, this has been a recent development and there has been insufficient time for the full impact of improvement to emerge. Senior leaders and members of the governing body show the necessary vision and aspiration to make crucial improvements. In doing this, they are led capably by the headteacher, and the deputy headteacher who has led the school during the absence of the headteacher. There is a renewed urgency in tackling weaker areas and ensuring that school strengths in provision are available to all pupils at all times.

The school has moved ahead successfully to ensure there is appropriate promotion of community cohesion. Senior leaders are currently and decisively working to extend the pupils' links with people in other communities and cultures which will lead to good practices and outcomes. The necessary procedures, policies and training are in place to support secure safeguarding of children. Actions to support the safeguarding of pupils are robust and the school maintains adequate records of its checks. Training of staff and members of the governing body is up to date and policies and procedures are subject to the necessary review and renewal.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity is satisfactory at present. Improvements to all pupils' progress and levels of attainment are the key to increased quality of opportunity. Any inappropriate behaviour among the pupils is stemmed quickly and effectively.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children enter school with the skills and knowledge well above those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and most join Year 1 with well above average attainment. The children are very assured, confident and quick learners when they start school, which gives them a head start. They were observed to share well, cooperate willingly and listen attentively during a lesson focused on their mathematical development. The children could sort into sets and talk about why an item fitted a particular group.

Provision in Reception is satisfactory. There are some good features, such as the effective use made of the Forest School to develop children's personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge of the world around them. The curriculum covers all six areas of learning appropriately. Assessment of children's learning is much improved compared with the past and involves children in self-assessment as well as regular comprehensive adult-led evaluations of progress.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily by a part-time Reception teacher. Partnership between staff is good, which is enabling the necessary improvements to be made. The school recognises that the outside area close to the Reception classrooms is not yet used to maximum benefit for the children and therefore is forming promising plans for improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The rate of return for the questionnaire was above average. Most parents and carers hold very positive views of the school, although a few raised written concerns. Chief among these worries are the system of mixed-age classes and the way in which pupils are selected for the different ability sets. There were also concerns about how behaviour is managed and how the school helps pupils prepare for the next stage in their education. However, many parents and carers praised the school for its welcoming ethos, the positive reception they received from staff and how it encouraged their children's enjoyment of school. Inspectors' judgements are similar to those of parents and carers. The school is reviewing its ability setting system, and improvements to teaching are helping pupils of different ages in the same class to increase their progress. Behaviour is good and pupils are prepared well for the next step in their education because they reach above average attainment and show good maturity in their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodmancote School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. Inspection team received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 306 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	58	55	40	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	52	60	43	3	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	38	74	54	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	38	66	48	13	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	37	76	55	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	39	69	50	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	36	86	62	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	36	58	42	19	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	35	70	51	14	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	26	76	55	18	13	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	24	80	58	9	7	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	40	29	48	57	5	4	6	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	47	65	47	6	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodmancote School, Cheltenham GL52 9HN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. Your friendliness, good behaviour and politeness were something we will remember for a long time. You helped us to find out more about your school. We judge that it gives you a satisfactory education. To help your teachers improve this, we have suggested three areas to work on.

- Make sure that the information your teachers gather about how well you are working is used to set you more challenging tasks.
- Make more checks on how successfully your lessons help you to improve your progress.
- Give you more opportunities to use ICT to develop skills and knowledge in all subjects.

We know you will help your teachers make these improvements. They will help you make good, rather than satisfactory, progress and go beyond the above average attainment you show now. To start, you can tell your teachers, and your parents and carers, about what you find easy and what you find difficult at school. Perhaps some of you would like to write about this.

Your school already does some good things. It helps you become sensible learners who work well with other pupils and your teachers. It also makes sure you are prepared well for secondary education. The way your teachers work with your parents and carers to help you learn is a strength. There have already been some noticeable improvements, including the quality of teaching, which is getting better. Best wishes for your future education.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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