

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135031
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	360679
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Browne
Headteacher	John Demmerling
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons taught by 15 different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, middle leaders, and the acting Chair of the Governing Body. Discussions were held with four groups of pupils from Years 2 to 6. Inspectors spoke informally to many other pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, assessments of their attainment and samples of their work. Documents relating to safeguarding (the care and protection of pupils) were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed 68 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by 24 members of staff and 101 pupils from Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors looked carefully at evidence produced by the school to see if recent improvements in attainment and progress are being sustained in Reception and Years 2, 4 and 6.
- They investigated how well early writing skills are developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and built upon in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- They investigated whether the new creative curriculum enables teachers to plan lessons which motivate and excite pupils to become more actively involved in their own learning, and make better progress in the development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- They considered whether the school provides enough opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand knowledge of the diversity of cultures present in the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This large primary school is situated close to Telford. Most of its pupils are of White British origin, with a few from other minority ethnic groups. Virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that in most schools, but there is a close to average proportion with a statement of special educational needs. These pupils have a range of needs, including speech, language, specific and moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The governing body runs a breakfast club each morning.

The headteacher took up his post at the beginning of the current academic year after a period of significant staff changes. The school is due to move into new premises in January 2012.

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

2

Main findings

Woodlands Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Following its previous inspection, standards fell sharply, but there is now much evidence of rapid improvement. Pupils are now making good progress in some classes, particularly in Years 2 and 6, as a result of the consistently good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching they receive in these classes. There are still some inconsistencies in progress throughout the school, however. Also, many pupils who are currently making good progress still need to make up ground that they lost in previous years, so their overall progress and achievement are satisfactory. The standard of writing has been particularly low throughout the school, but this is now steadily improving, as a result of a whole school focus for the past year. It remained much lower than the standards of reading and mathematics in 2010. Currently, attainment in English is below average, but in mathematics and science it is close to average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in any of these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities perform below their expected outcomes, but their attainment is improving, as is that of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils entitled to free school meals make better progress than their peers nationally. Improved attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage now provides a good foundation for the development of reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.

Improvements are due to the good leadership of the headteacher and senior managers, who communicate a clear vision for excellence and ambition for success. They lead by example in their teaching, through a successful programme of coaching and training of other staff. This programme is based on accurate self-evaluation, and sharply focused monitoring. It has led to an all-round improved standard of teaching in the current academic year. This is now satisfactory overall, with an increasing proportion of good teaching. School leaders have developed a robust system to track pupils' progress, through frequent and accurate assessment. This has enabled teachers to identify underachievement and address it rapidly and effectively. The development of a curriculum, based on creative and relevant themes, motivates many pupils to learn and develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in exciting ways. Teachers and pupils have considered together how best they learn, and active learning takes place in many classes, with good emphasis on drama, group discussions and practical activities. In some classes pupils are inactive and are passive learners. Many pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. Most teachers' marking gives pupils clear indications about how to improve their work and meet their targets. The rapid impact of these strategies for improvement demonstrates good capacity for further and sustained improvement.

Pastoral care is good, and, as a result, pupils behave well, particularly when they are engaged by challenging work in lessons. Their attendance is average. They feel safe and

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well-cared for, because they know they always have someone to talk to if they are worried. Pupils say some bullying takes place, but it is rare and quickly dealt with by adults. Pupils develop as confident young people who know how to live safe and healthy lives. They learn about managing money from an early age, but lower writing skills prevent them from being as well equipped as they might be for tackling new challenges at their secondary schools. Religious education lessons, visits and visitors, together with some developing links with schools in this country and abroad, enable pupils to get an insight into customs and beliefs of some different world cultures. They do not, however, get sufficient first-hand experience of the wide range of cultures present in the United Kingdom.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing to at least match the national average by:
 - removing inconsistencies in provision and increasing the amount of good or better teaching
 - ensuring that all pupils are actively engaged in their learning through work that is challenging
 - ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have sufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills independently
 - Increase the opportunities for pupils to gain wider first-hand experience of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils join the school with early skills and knowledge well below that expected for their age. Current attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is on track for children to reach the expected goals for their age. Children are making good progress, but in previous years this has not been the case. Most pupils throughout the school thoroughly enjoy their learning. Pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress when writing a story about mysterious happenings at a water-tower. Their mathematical problem solving skills were developed well and they showed high quality mathematical thinking as they sought to find new patterns in sets of numbers. In Year 2, all pupils, including higher ability and slower learners made excellent progress when writing a character profile of 'Mr Funny Bones'. Pupils in a few classes however, found problem solving far more difficult, as work was not well pitched to their ability range. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make good progress in writing in small groups, but sometimes their attainment is held back by too little opportunity for them to practise their individual skills.

Pupils are eager to take on responsibility and make their own contribution to the school community through the school and eco-councils. 'Woodies' patrol officers make sure that playtimes run smoothly. 'Building ambassadors' keep their classmates up to date about the progress of the new school building. The whole school is excited and enthusiastically engaged in the planning for the move. Pupils show their concern for others through a wide range of charitable giving to local community projects and some national and international

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ones, such as 'Comic Relief' and 'Children in Need'. Pupils have a strong sense of common values in their school community, but do not get enough opportunity to engage with groups from different ethnic backgrounds, to learn about their values.

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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Most teachers know their pupils well, and are ambitious for their success. They make learning enjoyable by good use of practical methods such as drama and role play. For example, Year 5 pupils chose a personality from photographs provided by their teacher and acted them out for classmates to guess who they were. When teachers expect pupils to spend too much time listening to them rather than doing things for themselves, they become passive, lose concentration and learning slows down. In Year 6 classes, where teaching and progress are often excellent, expectations of the quality and quantity of work are very high. Pupils are constantly reminded on the 'working walls' of how to present their work and evaluate their own progress. The regular carrying out of assessment, and its effective use to plan for the wide range of abilities, is a major factor in the improved attainment and progress which has occurred in the school over the last year. Self-evaluation techniques are being developed in all classes; for example, Year 2 pupils were able to check that their own and classmates' work met targets when it was projected on a screen for the whole class to see. Teaching assistants are well qualified and play an important role in extending the learning of pupils of all abilities.

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The creative theme-based curriculum is satisfactory but is having a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm and interest in learning. They gain good social skills through opportunities to work in groups to solve problems, for example, in 'Forest School' activities. Literacy and numeracy are appropriately reinforced throughout the curriculum, where pupils can see the relevance of their learning in real situations, and this is improving attainment. There are good examples of the use of ICT to extend the more able through animation work in Year 2, but not enough use of this in science. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and initiatives to meet the needs of the more able are starting to be implemented. Creative arts, including music, are strong in the school. The curriculum is extended by a wide variety of visitors and visits, but there are only a few after school clubs.

The school has well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils, which result in their good personal development and well-being. The school works consistently well with outside agencies to help all pupils who need to overcome barriers to their learning. Well focused support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has resulted in their improved achievement. The very good support for pupils and their families who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances is instrumental in removing barriers to learning. Good advice is given to pupils and their families when they enter or leave school. Good care is extended to the popular breakfast club, which provides nutritious food and a calm and punctual start to the school day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have resulted in good improvement, although this still has to achieve consistency throughout the school. More challenging targets for pupils' attainment are regularly set throughout the school and are increasingly being met. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are robust and effective in improving standards. The governing body is committed to the school's drive for improvement, but is currently training new members. Its effectiveness is satisfactory. It ensures that all statutory requirements are met, and has effective ways of gathering parents' and carers' views. Governors effectively run the breakfast club.

The school's procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. It adopts recommended good practice and recognises the need to take the dangers of developing technologies, such as the internet, into account, but a few policies lack clarity in some aspects. All staff are regularly well-trained in child protection issues. There are appropriate quality assurance and risk assessment procedures. The school provides satisfactory equality of opportunity

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for all its pupils. Through its provision of extra staff to guide small group teaching in and out of classes, and the successful sharing of senior teachers' expertise, it ensures that virtually all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and this is rapidly improving. However, some inconsistencies in the provision remain.

The school has analysed its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and used this to promote community cohesion actively within the school. It is reaching out to other communities, particularly through local links with the church, whose leaders run a successful after school club. The school has highly positive relationships with parents and carers. It regularly asks them for their views and provides clear and accessible channels for them to communicate with the school. It has beneficial partnerships with local schools and agencies to support pupils' learning and well-being. Plans for developing links with schools and communities abroad are at an early stage. Pupils gain understanding of some different faiths and their customs through the religious education curriculum, but do not get sufficient opportunities to engage with other people to improve their understanding of the wide range of cultures in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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

Children make good progress in developing their key literacy and numeracy skills because of the consistently good teaching of these skills and the many opportunities they have to practise them. Good opportunities to learn letters and their sounds are strongly reinforced through independent activities, with many opportunities to practise their early writing skills in the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' topic. This also produces a wealth of opportunities to count the number of beans in a bag or the number of steps Jack has to take to climb to the top of the beanstalk. Higher ability children are given good challenges to develop problem solving using simulations on the interactive whiteboards.

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Good progress in personal, social and emotional development ensures that the foundations are soon laid for the good behaviour in Key Stages 1 and 2. Children behave well, understand daily routines and play amicably with each other. They enjoy learning together and achieve well.

Teaching is good, and assessments are thorough and accurate. These show that progress in the current year has significantly improved after the previous year's underachievement and children's attainment by the end of Reception is likely to be broadly in line with those expected. The learning environment is well equipped and provides good quality activities in all the areas of learning for this age group, both inside and out.

Good leadership ensures planning is thorough and assessment is used effectively to match adult-led activities to the range of children's abilities and needs. The improvements in children's achievement have been brought about as a result of the leader's sharply focused development planning. The safety and care of all children have a very high profile. Good relationships with parents and carers extend learning into children's homes through activities such as 'stay and play'. All the questionnaire responses from parents and carers of Nursery and Reception children were entirely positive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

From a lower than average return of completed questionnaires, the majority of parents and carers are positive about their children's education. A few parents and carers think the school does not give them enough support in helping their children to learn, but inspectors found that the school offers this support in many ways. Some parents and carers thought the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Pupils confirmed bullying and poor behaviour is dealt with by staff. Inspectors found much evidence to show that the school does deal effectively with such behaviour, when it occurs, and found that behaviour in school is good. There were only a few comments, which were mixed. Some were very positive, but others referred to individual cases of suspected bullying. Pupils themselves reported that there is some bullying, but it is quickly dealt with by adults.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodlands Primary 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. The inspection team received 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 413 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	62	23	34	1	1	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	46	68	20	29	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	50	28	41	5	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	54	27	40	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	35	51	28	41	3	4	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	59	18	26	6	9	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	25	37	3	4	1	1
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)	32	47	24	35	5	7	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	50	29	43	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	51	20	29	7	10	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	43	30	44	6	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	34	50	28	41	1	1	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	56	24	35	3	4	3	4

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Telford, TF7 5NW

Thank you very much for being so friendly, polite and helpful to my colleagues and me during our visit, which we really enjoyed. We found that your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and it is rapidly improving. You are making much better progress now than previously, but some of you have a lot to catch up with and you need to make more consistently good progress to prepare you well for secondary school.

Most of you enjoy your lessons because of the exciting new curriculum projects. You enjoy doing practical and creative things, but not all of you get regular opportunities to do them. Your attainment in writing is not high enough. You told us that you enjoy school, and this is shown by your regular attendance. We found your behaviour and attitudes to learning to be good. All the adults take good care of you and you all get on well with each other. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Most of you are very responsible and keen to apply for important jobs around the school. Your school and eco-councils do a lot of good work. 'Woodies' patrol officers and building ambassadors are proud to do their jobs.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better, so I have asked them to do the following things:

Make sure you get good teaching in all classes so you make consistently good progress.

Improve your attainment in writing.

Make sure you get more opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge of the wide variety of cultures in the United Kingdom.

All of you can help by making sure you always do your best work.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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