

Woodnewton - A Learning Community

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122110
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359169
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	783
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eddie McKinnon
Headteacher	Ellen C Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons, taught by 23 different teachers. Meetings and discussions were held with members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies, governing body minutes, assessment data and curriculum plans. Questionnaires from 164 parents and carers were scrutinised as well as others from pupils and staff.

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

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics and the apparent discrepancy in attainment between boys and girls.
- Whether all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable and particularly the most able pupils.
- How effectively the school has improved its attendance figures since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

In 2006, the school formed following the amalgamation of the local infant and junior schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average. There is a Children's Centre on the same site. This is managed and governed by the headteacher and governing body of the school, but was not part of this inspection. The school runs both breakfast and after-school clubs.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that is improving rapidly. Pupils make good progress and their attainment, particularly in English, is above average. This demonstrates the success of the headteacher's ambition to raise the expectations of staff, pupils, parents and carers. The quality of teaching has improved and is good overall, but occasional inconsistencies have an impact on progress. In the best lessons, teaching is enthusiastic and creative, resulting in good progress and pupils eager to learn more. Where teaching is not as strong, there is too much teacher-talk and questioning does not probe pupils' understanding sufficiently. This practice, occasionally, results in the most-able pupils not achieving their best. The discrepancies in progress between boys and girls have been resolved and effective systems now ensure a rapid response to any underachievement.

Pupils are proud of their school and, as one said, 'Our teachers help us with almost anything.' Another wrote 'My school is the best school ever.' Behaviour is good and everyone tries to help one another. For example, playground leaders help other pupils to enjoy their break time and comfort them when needed. Pupils are involved fully within the local community. The school council is active and pupils take a pride in their work. Pupils carry out their responsibilities with great enthusiasm. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now average, but too many parents and carers still take their children on holidays during term time.

Pupils can talk about their targets and how they can improve. This has helped more pupils to reach levels above national averages. Progress in other subjects has also improved through better provision and teaching methods. More attention given to real-life experiences is helping pupils see a relevance to their learning and so make good links between different subjects. One example of this is the cross-curricular and regular use of computers to help develop key skills.

The school is an exceptionally caring and cohesive community which has built highly effective partnerships with parents and carers. Other links locally are good and those further afield, with schools and establishments abroad, are excellent. These links have assisted pupils in developing exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural attributes. Community cohesion is a strength of the school, with pupils having a strong understanding of the diverse multicultural society in which they live. The care, guidance and support of pupils are excellent. Safeguarding of pupils is good and they say they feel exceptionally safe while at school. Due to this, there is a noticeably harmonious atmosphere throughout the school.

The headteacher has the support of the whole school community. She has engendered a common sense of purpose and, along with the good support of other leaders, is driving forward a whole range of successful initiatives. Leaders have turned around a decline in attainment and set up an effective process of whole-school evaluation. Senior and middle

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leaders have been given the opportunity to take more responsibility within this process and are doing so increasingly. The rapid improvement in pupils' attainment, the raising of self-esteem of the school community and the consistency of provision all demonstrate good capacity to sustain improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance so that it is consistently above average by April 2012, by ensuring all parents and carers understand fully the need for full attendance.
- Eliminate occasional variations in pupils' progress by ensuring teaching is consistently good in all year groups, by:
 - ensuring questioning is used effectively to probe pupils' understanding
 - ensuring teachers do not talk too much, hindering progress
 - challenging the most capable pupils in all lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with achievements below those expected for their age and are now making good progress overall through the school. Both national test results and school data have shown a sustained improvement since 2009. The attainment of pupils presently in Year 6 shows a further strong improvement in English and a steady improvement in mathematics. In lessons, pupils demonstrate good understanding of grammar conventions and have good information and communication technology skills. For example, in one good lesson, pupils were eager to talk about how they went about constructing extended pieces of writing. Good partnership work helped pupils to evaluate each other's ideas in a positive way.

In mathematics, high-quality support and intervention has led to a noticeable improvement in attainment, although some occasional inconsistencies in teaching result in the most-able pupils not always achieving their best. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. These pupils make similar levels of progress to their peers, but from much lower starting points. Good resources are used well to ensure specific needs are met. Links with outside agencies and specialists ensure families can also support their children effectively. Pupils who start school speaking little or no English are, quickly, able to communicate confidently with their friends and teachers. The school provides one-to-one support for these pupils, ensures specialist assistance guides teachers' planning, and provides a language-rich environment for the pupils. This approach develops confidence rapidly and encourages pupils to communicate with their peers and adults alike.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength, although, because of a few persistent absentees, attendance is only average overall. Pupils talk, with an excellent understanding and empathy, about different nationalities within the school. In discussion, for example, they had an interesting exchange about the different holidays taken within different religions. In lessons, there are good levels of concentration and pupils work extremely well together. They are especially tolerant of those who take longer to understand a concept and need more help and often try to help them with their work. Behaviour is always good, both in lessons and when pupils are playing independently.

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Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, although discussion demonstrated this is not always followed up beyond school. The combination of good academic and personal development, along with an increasing opportunity to apply relevant key skills, is preparing pupils well for their future schooling and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

Common strengths in teaching include the quality of planning for different abilities and the methods used to ensure this happens. For example, lessons, typically, take good account of pupils' prior learning. On just a few occasions, work is not matched to prior learning so well and, when this happens, progress is only satisfactory. Strong whole-school assessment systems have been used well to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, supported by successful pupils' progress meetings. Hence, pupils are able to talk confidently about how to move to the next level and about what is on their target sheets. This is significantly better in English than mathematics, which is the main focus at the school for this year.

As pupils' attainment has risen, the school has started to redevelop the curriculum to make it even more exciting and relevant. While this is still 'work in progress', there are already many added extras, such as regular visits to other schools and good sports partnerships, art, drama and music. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the clubs and

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activities they are involved in, such as the many visits they make and the outdoor pursuit centres they attend.

Pupils are supported extremely well and this is valued by pupils and their parents and carers, who fully endorsed this in the questionnaires. There are close links with family liaison, therapy and speech and language agencies and especially the attached Children's Centre. The breakfast club provides an excellent start to the pupils' day, with a well-balanced choice of food and a positive nurturing environment. The after-school club provides pupils with a good 'wind down' opportunity, as well as support for their school learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been the driving force behind change. Her ambitious programme of initiatives has been achieved, in conjunction with the support of other leaders. This has ensured a robust, steady improvement in outcomes for pupils. The school has a pride in itself and all staff support the drive to improve fully; a fact supported by the positive return in staff questionnaires. To aid the process of improvement, partnerships have been used well to develop the provision and outcomes for pupils. Monitoring is effective and, as middle leaders have become more confident and comfortable in their role, their leadership skills have improved. This is not yet fully embedded across all subject areas. Nevertheless, senior leaders are more and more prepared to pass on responsibility to others to allow them to play an active role in whole-school developments. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and has a good understanding of its role. With realistic reports from senior staff and cross-referencing in school, it is able to gain a good understanding of what has been achieved and help to move the school forward.

Good assessment data show that all pupils are encouraged to perform at their best, so that there are effective processes to ensure equality of opportunity for all and there is no evidence of any discrimination. Procedures to ensure pupils are safeguarded are robust and rigorous, such as the monthly health and safety audits and the checking of suitability of personnel. The impact of the curriculum in developing pupils' understanding of the diversity of local, national and global cultures is extremely well embedded. The audit and evaluation show that there are many opportunities to interact with local schools as well as very positive links and support for a number of schools and groups in several countries. Members of the governing body are in the process of developing this even further.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The level of language development of children joining the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage is significantly below that expected for their age. Early and accurate assessments have been used to plan for everyone's learning needs, so that children have settled quickly and are already beginning to reach levels much closer to those expected. This is due to consistently good teaching. Nevertheless, there is still a wide range of ability, from those who are reading and writing simple sentences to some who have not gained an understanding of the link between speaking, reading and writing. Children behave extremely well and are enthusiastic to get on with their learning. They have good social skills and play well together and make sensible choices.

The staff have created an exciting and stimulating environment, ensuring that all areas of learning have the same priority. Displays encourage children to be involved actively. The acquisition of the outstanding outdoor provision has provided further enrichment for role play and physical activity, although staff do not always make the best use of this to stretch the children's learning further. Good planning allows a fluid use of the indoor and outside areas for the children. Adults, generally, intervene skilfully in the children's play to help guide children into learning new things, such as counting, early writing skills or gaining social interaction, for example when in the home corner and creative areas. The adults, occasionally, miss opportunities to extend discussion beyond the tasks to extend learning further.

The skills and knowledge of the leadership team, combined with a clear vision for future development, have led to consistent improvements in provision and outcomes. Effective training of staff has resulted in a highly skilled team who support and usually challenge children's progress. Their realistic evaluation rightly acknowledges that new procedures, systems and curricular opportunities will take a little time to have the fullest effect on the already good progress of pupils.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and all of the many improvements that have been made. Most replies state that they are happy with their children's experience at school. They are especially pleased with the leadership team who, they say, are approachable and make a significant difference to the self-belief and lives of the whole school community. A very small minority feel that the school does not provide them with sufficient support to aid their children's learning. Inspectors do not endorse this, as the school is able to demonstrate a wide range of activities and support it provides.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodnewton-A Learning Community 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 164 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 783 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	66	47	29	5	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	111	68	52	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	85	52	75	46	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	100	61	61	37	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	111	68	51	31	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	94	57	60	37	7	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	49	72	44	7	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)	77	47	80	49	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	54	68	41	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	49	75	46	5	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	74	45	72	44	15	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	92	56	67	41	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	112	68	51	31	1	1	0	0

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodnewton - A Learning Community, Corby NN17 2NU

Thank you for making our visit at Woodnewton so enjoyable. You will not be surprised to hear that we have said that you are at a good and rapidly improving school. This is something you should be very proud of since you have helped make it what it is. Your behaviour is good and you work extremely well together. This ensures that everybody feels exceptionally safe and well cared for and that you work in a calm and supportive atmosphere.

You get a good start to your education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Older pupils make good progress and results in national tests are rising, so that, in English and mathematics, they are above the national averages. Teaching is good, but occasional inconsistencies, sometimes, slow progress. Staff, increasingly, have the desire and ability to make sure you fulfil your potential. Lessons are increasingly interesting and exciting and teachers have a lot of plans to make them even better in all subjects.

To make your school even better, we have asked senior leaders to improve a few things.

Improve attendance by ensuring that all your parents and carers are made aware of the importance of you attending school all the time.

Iron out occasional variations in your progress by ensuring that:

- teachers use questions to make sure you understand your work fully
- teachers do not talk too much and so slow the pace of lessons
- teachers challenge you all to reach your full potential, especially those of you who are capable of reaching higher standards.

We know you will want to help in the process of becoming an outstanding school, so please make sure all of you keep suggesting improvements and attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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