

Woodford Halse Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122006
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380383
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Kirk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terri Lifford
Headteacher	Mike Wills
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Kirk

Additional Inspector

Israr Khan

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers, together with a number of shorter observations. They also listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff, and a representative of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information and teachers' records and planning. Minutes of meetings, the headteacher's reports to the governing body and monitoring undertaken by the governing body were also reviewed. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires completed by staff and pupils, as well as 155 received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Woodford Halse is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a few from a number of different minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. The school holds the ECO schools' Green Flag award. The children's centre which shares the school site is the subject of a separate 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Woodford Halse primary is a satisfactory school. It is not good because attainment is not above average and there are inconsistencies in teaching. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is now average across all subjects as a result of improvements made to teaching, but too few attain the higher levels. Positive action has been taken to improve achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, which had previously been weaker areas. Pupils write for a range of purposes, but have too few opportunities to practise mathematics skills across the curriculum. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's achievement is good.
- Teaching is satisfactory with the proportion of good practice increasing. Too often, teachers' expectation of what pupils can achieve in a lesson and over time is too low. There has been extensive professional development for teachers across the school, resulting in few other common weaknesses. However, individual teachers each have their own strengths and areas needing improvement, resulting in an inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. In most, lessons pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are well behaved but some inconsistencies exist. Low level disruption occurs when teachers' expectations are not high enough and the school's behaviour policy is not applied well.
- Historically, there has been underachievement in the school. The headteacher, senior leaders and staff are firmly focused on raising pupils' achievements. There are now good procedures for monitoring and improving teaching, but many of these have not yet had time to make a full impact on pupils' achievements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, increase the proportion of pupils who attain above expected levels in English and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing better guidance for older pupils on their choice of independent reading books and more regular opportunities for some younger pupils to read with an adult
 - ensuring pupils have better opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to at least 80% by:
 - sharing existing good and outstanding practice in teaching to eliminate inconsistencies
 - ensuring that teachers structure activities for pupils who are less able and those who may have special educational needs into smaller steps
 - raising some teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour to that of the highest.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with the knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. They achieve well in Nursery and Reception because teaching is well matched to their needs and a rich range of learning experiences captures their interests. In Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory. After the previous inspection, attainment declined, especially in mathematics, and particularly by the end of Key Stage 2. This was a result of a historical lack of progress across the school. Positive action was taken, resulting in a year-on-year improvement. This year, progress has been good or even outstanding for some groups of pupils, but some pockets of weaker progress remain. Attainment is average by the end of Years 2 and 6, including in reading. Improved tracking of pupils' achievements, targeted intervention where pupils have fallen behind and better teaching are contributing to the drive for improvement. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and improvements have been made in pupils' problem solving skills, but opportunities have been missed for pupils to apply these skills in other areas of the curriculum. There are few differences in achievement due to gender, ethnicity or for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. When gender differences have occurred in one or two year groups, notably in the younger boys' attainment in reading and writing, the school has ensured that additional intervention has narrowed this gender gap. The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to their peers. Many of these pupils are now making improved progress particularly in reading and writing as a result of targeted interventions.

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In a number of lessons seen, pupils made good progress because planning was well focused on pupils' abilities, and clear and concise explanations promoted good learning. For example, pupils in a Year 1 and 2 lesson made good progress in their understanding of how to construct a block graph or bar chart because, after a carefully planned initial explanation, the teacher challenged each ability group at the right level. More-able pupils independently labelled their axes and drew their bar chart, whilst less-able ones received support to complete their block graph. All pupils were using tallied data they had collected in a previous lesson.

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire thought their children were making good progress. Inspection evidence shows that progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Quality of teaching

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, skills are taught systematically and effectively and adults have an astute understanding of how young children learn. For example, in Reception the teacher used questioning effectively to help children express their ideas and extend their vocabulary when examining the scales on a rainbow trout. In the Nursery, a group of children were engrossed in using magnifying glasses to study and talk about pond weed and pond creatures.

Writing, which has been an area of development in teaching, is taught well by most teachers and many demonstrate clearly how to do tasks. For example in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils learned how to write in the third person using formal language and technical vocabulary, when the teacher showed them how to write an opening paragraph on a specific invention. Pupils have the opportunity to challenge themselves in all lessons, by choosing the level of difficulty of work that they do at the start of the independent session. Teachers sometimes guide pupils to tackle harder or easier work where necessary, but most pupils' self-assess their starting points accurately. Whilst the starting points in lessons for pupils is accurate, some teachers' lower expectations limit the progress that pupils make and some pupils, as a result choose to work at a slower pace than they could. Marking is informative and personalised targets help pupils to know where they have achieved well and what their next steps are to improve.

Inconsistencies in teaching are still much in evidence and the wide range in the quality of teaching observed during the inspection backed up the school's own evaluation. The less successful teaching results in pupils' progress being limited for a wide range of reasons, including trying to achieve too much in one lesson, missing early opportunities to correct pupils' misconceptions and a lack of guidance when pupils are working independently.

The teaching of most basic skills, including reading, is satisfactory. Some is better, for example phonics (the relationship between letters in words and the sounds they represent) is taught well and nearly all pupils are able to use their knowledge of letters and sounds in their reading successfully. In reading, discussions with older

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pupils indicated a lack of guidance in their personal book choices to ensure they read books written by good quality authors across a range of genres. Evidence showed that the lack of reading support at home for some younger pupils is not compensated for adequately by additional support in school. During the inspection, pupils were observed writing for a range of purposes, including extended pieces of writing in different styles. There is a sufficient focus on helping pupils to improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling through support such as using the 'criteria for success' in their initial writing and time is well spent helping pupils to improve their writing through specific editing. Teaching assistants are usually effectively deployed and make satisfactory and often good contributions to pupils' learning through one-to-one support and small-group teaching.

Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive satisfactory teaching. They usually receive suitably tailored guidance and support but, occasionally, teachers and teaching assistants do not structure their work or the work for the lower attaining pupils into small enough steps to promote better achievement. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire thought that teaching was good. Whilst inspection evidence shows much teaching to be good, with examples of outstanding teaching, overall it is satisfactory but improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is promoted satisfactorily and there were some good examples, observed during the inspection, of pupils helping one another when learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Across the school, pupils feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Although most pupils behave well in lessons as a result of their positive attitude to learning, and are polite, courteous and sensible around school, behaviour and safety overall are satisfactory. Whilst most parents and carers were complimentary about pupils' behaviour and safety, a few parents, carers and pupils raised concerns about the behaviour of a minority of pupils through questionnaires and through discussions with inspectors. In lessons where the teachers do not have high expectations of behaviour, pupils are not always fully engaged in their learning and some low level disruption occurs occasionally. There is a similar pattern in the playground. Parents, carers and pupils feel that bullying is addressed appropriately by the school and pupils have been taught how bullying can take different forms. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils told inspectors how much they had learned about Internet safety by undertaking a 'Cyber-café' quiz. Attendance levels are average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders have undertaken extensive monitoring and evaluation. As a result of shared expectations, initially drawn up by the headteacher and linked to the performance management of teachers and teaching assistants, all analysis follows a system which ensures that monitoring information from a range of sources, for example, pupils' books, teachers' planning and lesson observations is

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cross referenced in any evaluation. This is a strength in leadership and management which has now eliminated nearly all inadequate teaching and poor progress, resulting in a trend of sustained improvement in achievement overall. The impact of this and other effective tools has been to accelerate pupils' progress, but not sufficiently well for pupils' achievements to be good. Furthermore, there are still some misconceptions from teachers regarding what constitutes good progress over the year from pupils, for example in Key Stage 1. Professional development opportunities for staff in the school have been extensive. For example, they have enabled teachers to improve the impact of their feedback to pupils through marking and improve pupils' understanding of mathematics through problem solving.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and most, but not all, of the staff and pupils are fully committed to the drive and ambition demonstrated by key leaders. The headteacher and governing body have taken appropriate action if teaching or conduct has not met the required standard. Leadership is distributed well and the governing body is kept well informed, partly through useful reports, and partly through their own first hand monitoring and evaluation visits in school. This enables them to challenge and support the school on the right issues. Safeguarding requirements are met and form part of the governing body's regular monitoring.

The school has developed a skills-based curriculum which is satisfactory. While improvements have been made to extend writing across all areas, the school is aware that mathematics is not used enough in other subjects. The curriculum also has specific strengths, for example the impact of the Forest School's programme on some pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequately supported. There have been improved opportunities for pupils to learn about religions that differ from their own, but some misconceptions still exist regarding pupils' knowledge of different cultures. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. However, there have been some inconsistencies in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching they receive. Discrimination is tackled appropriately.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodford Halse Church of England School, Daventry, NN11 3RQ

Thank you for making us very welcome and for answering our questions when we visited your school recently. Your school is satisfactory and you attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time you leave the school. Your school is improving and has a number of strengths, so your progress is getting better because of improvements to teaching and to the way the headteacher and senior staff are running the school. You told us that you feel safe in school and get on well with each other. Your behaviour is satisfactory although you did bring to our attention, through the questionnaire that you completed for us and our discussions, that at times you felt the behaviour of a minority of pupils was not good enough.

We have asked your school to make some improvements. We want more of you to reach above-average standards by really concentrating in lessons and challenging yourself by choosing some of the harder work more often. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you have more opportunities to use your mathematics skills in other subjects and to give better guidance on your choice of books. There is some good teaching in your school and different teachers are good at different things, so we have asked them to share their best ideas with each other to make everyone's teaching even better. For some of you, who find work quite difficult, we have asked your teachers to make the steps a little smaller for you to help you to understand new ideas more easily.

You can help as well by always trying your best in lessons and in your homework and by making sure that you are one of the pupils whose behaviour is always excellent.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk
Lead Inspector

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