

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School

Church Road, North Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 5PD

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, which is having a noticeably positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff have the highest expectations of pupils, who relish the challenge they experience in their learning and are keen to impress their teachers.
- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress as they move up through the school. As a result, pupils' achievement overall in various subjects is well above average by the time they leave the school. The most able, in particular, achieve highly.
- The school is a very caring community where pupils' emotional well-being and the 'wrap-around' care they receive are taken very seriously. In this school, the 'whole' pupil matters, so that all aspects of pupils' development are nurtured.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well because staff have a keen understanding of their needs. Staff put in place appropriate support to ensure that pupils are ready to learn and able to make rapid progress.
- Pupils are very well behaved. They are self-assured, courteous and friendly. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and consideration.
- Children in the early years enjoy a rich, stimulating school experience. This provides a strong foundation on which their future learning is built.
- Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a wide, exciting curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities to learn skills and knowledge across a diverse range of subjects, aside from English and mathematics.
- Leaders are well supported by governors and the school improvement partner, who provide a good balance of challenge and support. This support has helped teaching to flourish and achievement to rise significantly across a range of subjects.
- Staff have established very positive relationships with many parents. However, there is a small minority of parents who are not fully satisfied with some aspects of the school's work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen parental engagement by working more closely with those parents who are not fully satisfied with some aspects of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is reflective, measured and determined in his approach to school leadership. This has enabled him to quickly realise his vision of a high-performing school in which all pupils are valued and achieve their potential. During his time in post, he has built on existing good foundations to nurture a culture in which staff and pupils are able to flourish.
- The headteacher is clear-minded and passionate about pursuing his goal to make the improvement of teaching and learning 'the main thing'. This is because he is adamant in his conviction that teaching and learning are the cornerstones on which pupils' successes are built. He is supported well by the newly appointed deputy headteacher and middle leaders.
- Leaders have redefined how teachers teach so that their approach dovetails more effectively with the new national curriculum. This ensures that pupils achieve at greater depth. This strategy is based on carefully considered research. It reflects the way in which the headteacher questions and evaluates what does, and does not, work.
- The leadership of teaching has enabled staff and pupils to develop greater clarity and purpose about what is being taught and why. Prior learning is reinforced and consolidated before pupils acquire new skills or knowledge. This means that new learning is able to take root in 'good soil'. As a result, pupils' achievement has risen substantially across a range of subjects by the time they leave the school.
- Leaders have an incisive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They know precisely what works well and what could be better. They act swiftly to tackle issues when they come to light.
- Middle leaders are highly effective in their work to develop individual subject areas. This is because they feel empowered by senior leaders. Middle leaders are proud to take ownership of their work because they have been trusted to evaluate the quality of provision in their subjects and implement strategies for improvement. To this end, staff work collaboratively and value sharing practice that improves their effectiveness.
- Leaders are passionate in their belief that the school curriculum should not just be a means of preparing pupils for national tests in core subjects. They believe that pupils are entitled to a curriculum that is exciting and adventurous. Consequently, the curriculum provides pupils with a balanced diet of music, art and physical education in addition to more academic subjects. The work in pupils' books shows that they have many opportunities to study science, religious education and humanities subjects. Often, the cross-curricular links between these different disciplines are explored in topic books.
- Additional funding is used very well to support the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school. The coordinator who leads this area of work has a strong understanding of each pupil's needs. Consequently, plans are in place that indicate what specific interventions are required to overcome barriers to learning. The support provided takes different forms. In addition to programmes that allow pupils to catch up in specific subjects, trained counselling staff also tackle emotional and behavioural

issues. Staff recognise that it is important to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem at the outset to ensure that they are ready for learning. Additional funding is also used to ensure that pupils take advantage of extra-curricular activities. For example, nearly all disadvantaged pupils have been provided with free music lessons in order to learn to play the trumpet.

- Even though the school is highly successful in many ways, leaders are not complacent. They have acted on the advice of the school improvement adviser to improve safeguarding and to help middle leaders in becoming adept at monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
- The sports premium funding has been used well to improve facilities, such as the new all-weather long jump track. Funding has also secured the services of a specialist physical education (PE) teacher who has been able to teach dance and gymnastics. Furthermore, the grant has enabled the school to participate in a greater variety of sports competitions, which has increased pupils' involvement in sports. Pupils have benefited from this participation to the extent that, last year, the school won the Stroud District Sports event in track and field.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey would recommend the school. One parent stated, 'Woodchester is a truly fantastic school.' Another parent stated, 'My children will leave this school with happy memories for life and a great start to their education.' However, not all parents who responded to Parent View are satisfied with all aspects of the school's work.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's drive to improve teaching and learning, and to support pupils' holistic development. They understand the school well because they interrogate published performance information effectively. Governors also take full advantage of training to improve their effectiveness, and take account of the advice of external advisers. This helps governors to ask challenging questions of school leaders and weigh up what they are told. One governor said, 'We don't always accept the answers. We probe and go further.'
- Equally, governors provide a corresponding level of support because of the positive relationship that has been fostered between leaders and governors. This relationship is characterised by trust, honesty and openness. One governor mentioned how the headteacher is always prepared to 'put his cards on the table.'
- Governors are very involved with the school. They frequently visit to become familiar with aspects of the school's work and monitor progress. However, governors are aware that their role is strategic rather than operational and are careful not to overstep this mark.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are clear about their duty to keep children safe, and take their responsibilities seriously. The school culture is one in which all pupils are known and respected as

individuals. Staff are vigilant, noticing any changes in pupils' presentation or behaviour that might raise potential concerns. All staff are appropriately trained in child protection and know how to refer any concerns they may have.

- The school site has been risk-assessed and managed accordingly to ensure that pupils are safe. There are appropriate levels of staff supervision during breaktimes and at lesson changeover. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe as they move through the school building, being careful and considerate of others. At the end of breaktime, pupils were observed lining up outside in an orderly fashion and re-entering the building calmly and quietly in single file. This is also the case when they leave assembly and return to classrooms.
- Pupils who spoke to the lead inspector reported that they feel safe in school. This is primarily because they know they can share any worries they may have with members of staff. Pupils were not aware of any bullying in the school. They also showed that they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. For example, pupils are wisely cautious of anything that does not 'feel right', such as someone online requesting personal details. They know to inform an adult straightaway if they are at all concerned. One pupil sensibly said that it is safer to use a cartoon image for a profile page rather than an actual photograph that would reveal a child's identity.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey, apart from one who did not know, agreed that their child was safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have the highest expectations of pupils. Pupils are expected to try their best, to work hard and to keep going when they find their learning difficult. They are taught to be resilient and self-sufficient. When the lead inspector asked pupils how they are helped to overcome difficulties, one replied that pupils knew it was important to persevere.
- Teachers are highly skilled professionals. They use their subject knowledge and professional expertise to plan activities that get the best from pupils. Leaders' work to change the way teachers teach has played to the strengths of staff. This approach has channelled teachers' professionalism so that they focus on building up the security and 'stickability' of pupils' learning. In this way, pupils are able to learn at greater depth and make more rapid progress.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy their lessons because teachers plan activities that are not only stimulating but also very well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils work in a contented, purposeful way. They happily ask questions so that they can move forward in their learning. They are willing and able to be self-sufficient, or work with others as the occasion demands. One pupil who spoke to the lead inspector said that school 'gives you a good education in a fun way'.
- Staff use the school's assessment system to best effect. Their experience, shared practice within school and moderation with professionals in other schools means that assessment is used well to monitor the progress of pupils. The assessment system fits neatly with the teaching approach that promotes learning at greater depth. Pupils and staff understand this approach equally well. Pupils' learning is developed layer on layer.

For example, pupils first begin to understand a single concept in isolation. This then develops through different stages to the extent that the concept can be understood and applied in a range of different contexts. Accurate assessment enables staff to monitor these incremental developments carefully and make suitable adjustments to teaching for individual pupils.

- Feedback is used very effectively, particularly at key stage 2, to help pupils improve their work. Pupils are encouraged to take an ongoing interest in their work, to 'wrestle' with it and see it as something which is constantly evolving. Pupils are prompted to consider their choices, justify their reasoning and consider how aspects of their work might be improved. The learning dialogue with teachers encourages pupils to be active participants.
- All pupils are challenged to think and work hard. They relish the chance to try a more taxing task or consider an intriguing problem, particularly the most able pupils. Teachers are alert to when pupils need to be moved on and pushed; they provide suitable tasks at the right time to do this. In mathematics, pupils are frequently asked to explain their reasoning and justify why they have used certain methods. They also do this in the context of each other's work. For example, one pupil reflected on a problem devised by another pupil. The problem was, 'There are 125 sheep in a flock and five dogs. How old is the shepherd?' The pupil pointed out that insufficient information had been provided and suggested it be rephrased. He presented the new, improved problem as, 'A shepherd starts his job at the age of 18 and gains 10 sheep a year. How old is he if he has 125 sheep?'
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils. They ask helpful questions that promote deeper thinking without leading pupils too readily to the answers. For example, in an observed lesson, a pupil asked a teaching assistant how to work out 10% of something. The teaching assistant referred the pupil to some other working in which he had worked out 20%. She prompted him to consider how this might help him find an answer. When the pupil provided a method, he was asked, 'How do you know that?', in order to get him to explain his method.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate towards others. This is partly because they feel safe and comfortable in school. They know that staff have only their best interests at heart and look after them well. Trained counsellors help pupils who experience emotional, social or behavioural difficulties to get the most from school.
- Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop personal responsibility. For example, pupils can join the school council and take on house leadership roles. They also act as 'buddies' to children in Reception. Older pupils form a 'behaviour team', whose job it is to monitor and sensitively correct the behaviour of younger pupils. As part of this role, behaviour-team pupils are able to issue tokens that reward good behaviour to the younger pupils.

- Pupils are very well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave Woodchester. They achieve highly in their core subjects and have experienced a broad curriculum in depth. They are also 'well-rounded' individuals because of the extra-curricular experiences that support their development. These include the various clubs, such as traditional sports, streetdance, music and movement, gymnastics, film club and art club. All pupils are trained in cycling proficiency and many learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils often have the opportunity to perform or speak publicly. The headteacher is keen to promote these activities because he is passionate in his view that pupils require confidence to compete in the world.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well developed. The school's Christian values are apparent not only in the high-quality religious education teaching pupils receive but also in the culture fostered by staff and governors. In the foyer, a 'prayer tree' stands ready to receive prayers written on cards by pupils, and hung from branches on the tree. Pupils are told, 'We place our prayers and our thoughts on a prayer tree. They grow to fill our thoughts and minds.' Year 5 pupils' books showed examples of learning to write political speeches in order to understand voting and democracy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The attendance of pupils overall, and also of individual groups of pupils, is above the national average. There is very little persistent absence, and it is well below the national average. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly, arrive promptly and enthusiastically to lessons, and are well equipped. They are highly respectful of the school environment, which is clean, tidy and attractive. No litter was observed around the school site.
- Pupils respect the school's behaviour system because they understand how the various rewards and sanctions are applied. Pupils who spoke to the lead inspector reported that pupils behave well in their lessons and around the school site. One pupil said, 'There's never bad behaviour that distracts you when you're having fun with the learning.'
- The pupils who spoke to the lead inspector reported that they were not aware of any bullying in the school. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View also agreed that pupils behaved well and that any bullying that did occur was effectively dealt with.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Over time, pupils achieve highly in their different subjects by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. This is because they make strong progress as they move up through the school. In 2016, pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was in the top 10% of schools and, therefore, significantly above the national average.
- In 2016, the progress and attainment of the most able pupils at the end of Year 6 was in the top 10% of schools nationally. This was also the case in mathematics for middle-

ability pupils.

- Pupils have consistently made progress that is either in line with, or above, the national average in writing at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' attainment has been consistently in line with, or significantly above, the average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education as a result of these high levels of achievement.
- The progress of current pupils in the school is rapid and sustained. The school's own performance information indicates that pupils in Year 6 are making comparable progress to last year's cohort. The progress of pupils in other year groups is also accelerating quickly. Work in pupils' books shows that various factors are enabling pupils to move forward rapidly. Pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning, which is closely allied to stimulating teaching and high-quality feedback.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school are monitored closely to ensure that they thrive. Pupils make comparable progress with their peers because high-quality support tends to their social and emotional needs, ensuring that they are ready for learning. Building on this foundation, specific literacy and numeracy programmes help pupils to catch up if they fall behind. Work in books shows that staff have the same high expectations of disadvantaged pupils as of their peers. The work these pupils are provided with challenges them to do their best.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress, to the extent that many come off of the special educational needs register. Pupils progress well in school and their achievement is comparable with all pupils nationally. This is because the extra funding is used to great effect and teachers set appropriate tasks that are accessible without being too easy. Expectations are also high for this group of pupils. The science work of one Year 6 pupil showed a high level of expectation. He produced a high-quality piece of extended writing about the water-cycle. He wrote in detail, using paragraphs and other technical skills learned in English.
- In 2016, some middle-ability pupils at the end of key stage 1 did not make sufficient progress in reading and mathematics. Leaders have taken action to ensure that current pupils in key stage 1 are making the progress they are capable of.
- Pupils are very capable readers by the time they leave the school. This is because they receive strong support in the early years, which is built on in successive years. Although pupils' achievement in the 2016 phonics check fell below average, this is not typical. Leaders introduced a different approach in 2016 which did not work as expected. Leaders have fully evaluated why the approach did not work and have taken action to ensure that the failure is not repeated. Current progress information indicates that the achievement of current pupils in Year 1 is expected to be higher than average when they take the phonics check.

Early years

Outstanding

- The highly experienced early years coordinator is very clear about what she wants to achieve. She is passionate about encouraging all aspects of children's development and

seeing children flourish. She brings her experience to bear in the planning and resourcing of early years provision. The early years coordinator constantly tries to improve practice and is always looking for ways to challenge children and make learning fun.

- Staff know the children very well. They understand when children need to be given free rein to explore, imagine and experiment, and when learning needs to be 'scaffolded' more formally. For example, during an observed session, some children were choosing what they wanted to do, such as manipulating pots and pans of different sizes. At the same time, however, another child was receiving one-to-one attention to help him write his classmates' names with paint and paintbrush. The teacher was helping the child to practise his writing in a fun way.
- Children's needs are well understood because the early years coordinator uses ongoing assessment accurately to track their progress in the many different areas of development. If children fall behind in any one area, this is identified quickly and action taken to help them make more rapid progress. Current assessment information indicates that children are making rapid, sustained progress in nearly all of their different areas of development. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling.
- The number of children achieving a good level of development has been consistently higher than average over time. In 2016, as in the previous year, children's achievement was above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make an enjoyable start at school. This is because staff plan a wide range of absorbing, exciting activities for them. The inside and outside areas are set up to support literacy and numeracy learning. In addition, teachers provide resources and activities that assist children's physical development and their understanding of the wider world. As a result, children's behaviour is very good. They respond well to adults and each other, taking turns with other children and listening carefully to instructions.
- Staff have established very positive relationships with parents. On a weekly basis, the early years coordinator emails parents about what the children will be learning in the week to come. Parents are also invited to participate in the online assessment system. They are able to upload their own evidence of their child's learning at home, for example in the form of a photograph. This has been highly effective in encouraging parents to play an active role in their children's education. It also has a wider application that supports children's development in the early years. For example, one parent uploaded a photograph of her child's new positive behaviour chart so that the teacher could reinforce the routines established at home.
- The early years coordinator has established a very strong relationship with the main feeder pre-school that is on the same site as Woodchester. This ensures that children are given a 'flying start' when they begin school. For example, children come over from pre-school for 'snack time' once a week to help familiarise them with school. The early years coordinator works closely with pre-school staff to discuss and cater for children who have very specific needs.

School details

Unique reference number	115704
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10025043

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tessa Pemberton
Headteacher	Glyn Jones
Telephone number	01453 872476
Website	www.woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk
Email address	head@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 March 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2014.
- The deputy headteacher took up post in January 2017.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Woodchester Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The number of girls in the school is lower than average.

- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive support is above the national average.
- There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed learning in lessons with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years coordinator and the middle leader responsible for coordinating the pupil premium funding. Additionally, the lead inspector had discussions with pupils, representatives of the governing body, a parent and the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, governing body minutes and progress information. In addition, records of the monitoring of teaching, attendance and behaviour information, and safeguarding records were considered.
- The lead inspector scrutinised pupils' work from different year groups and observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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