INSPECTION REPORT

WOODLAND VIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Norwich, Norfolk

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120912

Headteacher: Mr Lindsay Towle

Reporting inspector: Mr Roger Holmes 2632

Dates of inspection: $25^{th} - 27^{th}$ June 2001

Inspection number: 192967

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 - 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ivy Road

Spixworth Norwich Norfolk

Postcode: NR10 3PY

Telephone number: 01603 898292

Fax number: 01603 891407

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Perry

Date of previous inspection: 10th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school How good the school is What the school does well What could be improved How the school has improved since its last inspection Standards Pupils' attitudes and values Teaching and learning Other aspects of the school How well the school is led and managed Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodland View Middle School takes pupils between the ages of eight and twelve with 269 girls and boys on roll. It is smaller than most other middle schools. Numbers have risen since the last inspection in 1996 as the school has grown in popularity with parents. Almost all the pupils are white and all have English as their first language. Fewer than four percent are claiming free school meals, which is well below the national average. Over a fifth of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is a similar proportion to most schools, but most of their needs are relatively minor and only three pupils have statements for their special needs, which is a much lower proportion than in most schools. Pupils coming into the school have a fairly wide range of attainment, but overall their attainment is better than most children at eight years old.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodland View is a very effective school. Pupils make good progress, achieve very good results in tests at the end of Year 6 and are well above average when they leave the school at the end of Year 7. Teaching is good and pupils respond particularly positively, concentrating hard in lessons and behaving well throughout the school. There is a strong sense of purpose in the school as a result of the headteacher's very successful leadership, everyone understands what the school stands for and they work together very well to help take it forward. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress and reach high standards.
- · Teaching is good and pupils work hard.
- Staff take very good care of the pupils and as a result pupils respond very positively.
- Leadership is very effective.

What could be improved

 The school has no significant weaknesses; more use could be made of assessment to help pupils do even better.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its last inspection in 1997. The four key issues that were identified have all been addressed. Where there had been problems in Year 7 this is now a strength of the school, with very strong teaching and pupils achieving well socially and academically. The school has also identified other areas for development during this period. The quality of teaching has improved and results have continued to rise in the Key Stage 2 tests, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now much better and the school buildings and grounds have also been improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

	compared with				
Performance in:		similar schools			
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	А	Α	A*	А	
Mathematics	А	В	Α	В	
Science	Α	Α	Α	В	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Attainment is very high in all three core subjects, and particularly in English where the results in 2000 were amongst the top five percent of schools in the country. Even though the pupils come into school with standards of attainment higher than average for their age, these results represent good progress and achievement. Results have continued to rise in all three subjects and are staying well above the national average. Girls do even better than boys, particularly in English, even more than the case nationally.

These strong results in the core subjects have not been achieved at the expense of neglecting the rest of the curriculum. Attainment in other subjects is at least sound and pupils develop their creativity and their physical skills well.

These standards are built on very successfully during the pupils' last year in the school and by the time they leave, at the end of Year 7, pupils' standards are well above average in the core subjects and they are thoroughly prepared for the next stages of education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment		
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and take a justifiable pride in producing high quality work.		
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in all classrooms and around the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and responsive.		
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop very well at the school, growing in confidence and maturity. They take responsibilities and support each other willingly. Relationships are very good and the ethos of mutual trust plays a large part in the quality of the school's work.		
Attendance	Attendance is good. Parents and pupils realise the importance of not missing work.		

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years	aged 11-12 years		
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good		

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching was very good or excellent in 30 percent of lessons, good in 50 percent and satisfactory in the remaining 20 percent of lessons. English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, are taught well and the quality of teaching generally has benefited from the thorough and thoughtful way the staff have approached developments in these subjects.

Lessons are planned carefully. Teachers prepare themselves very thoroughly so that they can respond to pupils questions. Work is made lively and interesting and pupils respond well by taking an active part in lessons and by rising to the challenge of demanding work. Teachers know the pupils well and make sure that they are all able to follow the lessons. On just a few occasions some pupils had difficulty in understanding the work in mathematics lessons and the teacher did not analyse their problems closely enough to help them make best progress. Teaching is particularly effective in the older classes because of the confidence that the pupils and teachers have in each other.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment		
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, covering all of the required subjects. There is an emphasis on literacy and numeracy but pupils also meet the full range of other subjects. The curriculum is strengthened by a good range of visits and by visitors coming into the school.		
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Arrangements are sound and all requirements are met.		
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All pupils currently at the school have English as their main language. Staff are qualified to teach English as an additional language if the need arises.		
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on important issues in lessons and in assemblies. They have many opportunities to take responsibilities and to work alongside others. The school provides a wide range of cultural experiences but pupils have little experience of the range of cultures that exist in other parts of the country. Older pupils in particular value the personal and social education programme and the opportunities they have to talk freely about any concerns they have. Younger pupils benefit similarly from discussions in 'circle time'.		

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. Staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their well-being, noticing when there are any changes in behaviour and looking for the cause. Assessment information is used well to keep track of pupils' progress and this could be further strengthened by setting targets for individual developments.
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Parents have very positive views of the school and support its work well. They attend consultation meetings regularly and there is a thriving Parents and Friends Association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment		
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has led the school very well for many years, establishing it as a thriving community where everyone feels valued and wants to do well. He is well supported by the deputy head and subject co-ordinators. Work in English and mathematics has been particularly successful in establishing whole-school policies and helping teachers work well together.		
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and committed to the school. Many are regular visitors and take a close interest in developments. Statutory duties are carried out effectively.		
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its work very closely. Information from pupils' performance and from watching teachers work has been used successfully to take the school forward.		
The strategic use of resources	Staff are deployed carefully, to make best use of their talents. Funds have been used wisely to build up resources and to improve pupils' learning in ICT. The school provides good value for money.		

Decisions at the school are made after consultations and discussions. Staff work well together and share a common understanding of the importance of the work they are doing. Spending decisions are made after careful consideration of alternatives so that the school gets good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved		
 Pupils make good progress Behaviour is good Teaching is good The school is well led Children grow in maturity Pupils take a pride in their work 	 The amount of homework More extra-curricular activities More chances to work with the school 		

Inspectors agree with the parents' overwhelming positive views of the school. Some parents thought too much homework was set, others too little. Homework diaries show a well-planned programme of homework which supports the good progress pupils make. There is currently a reasonable range of extra activities for pupils, which the school is extending by introducing more sporting activities with the help of the local council. Parents are encouraged to support the work of the school. They are told what the children will be learning each term and welcomed into the classrooms if they want to help directly. However, the school takes this response seriously and will investigate other ways in which parents can support its work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress and reach high standards

- When they come into the school at eight years of age, pupils' attainment is better than in most schools. In the national tests taken at age seven, a higher proportion than usual have gained the expected level 2 and more than usual have gone on to the higher level 3. This gives the school a good start, which is built on very successfully. Looking at the progress made by the pupils who took their tests at age seven in 1996 and then their Key Stage 2 tests at the school in 2000, they were above average in English when they came into the school, but well above average by age eleven. Their scores represent much better progress than is achieved in most schools. Progress in mathematics and science was not quite so good, but still better than in most schools.
- Results in the Key Stage 2 national tests, when most pupils are eleven years old, have been well above average for many years. As national results have improved, the school has successfully maintained its lead over other schools. In 2000, the results of all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, were well above the national average, and for English they were amongst the highest five percent of schools in the country. In all three subjects almost all pupils reach the expected level 4 and many more go on to the higher level 5 than in most schools. Comparing the results with those achieved by schools with a similar small proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, the English results were still well above average and those for mathematics and science were above average. Over the last five years English results have been relatively better than mathematics and science. Pupils achieve roughly the same levels in English and science, but nationally scores are higher for science than for English. As a result, pupils at Woodland View are scoring more than half a level better than the national average in English and about a third of a level better in mathematics and science.
- These results are reflected in lessons throughout the school and the good progress is maintained or even improved during the pupils' final year in school, so that when they leave at the end of Year 7 their attainment is much better than expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have a thorough understanding of these subjects, rather than just having learnt the facts necessary to pass the tests and they enjoy using their knowledge and finding out more. For example, in a lesson on prefixes they explored the use of 'in' to negate a word, such as 'distinct' and 'indistinct'. When searching for other examples they quickly recognised examples where 'in' does not work in this way, such as 'intact', and then had fun speculating on what the opposite could be.
- These high standards in the core subjects have not been achieved by ignoring other areas of the curriculum; sufficient time is allocated to these subjects and pupils have a good range of opportunities to develop their physical and creative abilities alongside the more academic areas of the curriculum. It was not possible to inspect every subject in detail on this short inspection, but evidence points to standards being satisfactory or better across the board. For example, in ICT pupils use the computers confidently and competently, using programs to produce imaginative layouts of written work and to handle data.

Teaching is good and pupils work hard

- Teaching is good overall and very good in the oldest classes. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is a major factor in the continued rise in standards. About 80 percent of lessons were good, very good or excellent and the remaining 20 percent were satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully, with a strong emphasis on what the pupils will learn. The school has made very effective use of national guidance for subjects and this has provided a clear and logical framework for the sequence of work in each subject. Teachers are using this framework very effectively and planning lessons together for each year group. This joint planning is very effective, enabling teachers to exchange ideas and share their skills and experience. The content of lessons is chosen carefully to match pupils' needs and interests. Lessons are purposeful, lively and interesting. Pupils appreciate this guality and respond well, concentrating hard and working well.
- 7 Teachers know their pupils well and have established very good working relationships. There are well-established routines in all classes so that very little time has to be spent on routine administration. Behaviour is also very good and so staff can concentrate on their teaching in a pleasant and productive atmosphere.
- 8 The objectives for the lessons are explained to pupils at the beginning of the lessons and almost always returned to at the end, to check if the learning has been achieved. Pupils respond very positively to this involvement and older ones in particular often make perceptive comments about how their understanding has developed. Pupils in the older classes also have personal targets that help them make improvements, for example making more use of reported speech in a story. They take these seriously as a result of their teacher's interest and make good progress because of the way the targets focus their efforts. Pupils in other classes would also benefit from the same approach.
- 9 All teachers provide good examples to the pupils about the importance of presenting work well. Displays are informative and attractive and the teachers' own writing is clear and stylish. They insist that the pupils present their work well and this helps to develop the sense of pride they have in their achievements. The care the pupils take with layout also supports their understanding of such things as place value in mathematics; clear handwriting helps them learn spellings and well drawn diagrams help them learn in science.
- Lessons are often made more successful by the teachers' skilful use of questions. These encourage the pupils to think more deeply about the work being covered and the pupils' responses help the teacher judge how well they are understanding the lesson. Teachers use language carefully themselves and expect pupils to do the same, giving full answers, speaking clearly and expressing themselves well. In a Year 7 English lesson the teacher helped the pupils explore a passage from 'The Rats of Nim' by asking them what each of the characters was likely to be feeling. The pupils responded very thoughtfully, using correct technical language and explaining the reasons behind their answers. As a result, their subsequent class reading of the passage was full of meaning and lively characterisation.

Staff take very good care of the pupils and as a result pupils respond very positively

Staff know the pupils well and take a keen interest in their well-being. Relationships are particularly good between teachers and pupils, and support staff also work well with the

pupils so that the children know they will be treated fairly and their views respected by all adults in the school. As a result they grow in confidence and, following the model established by the adults, they also treat each other well, listening to different points of view in lessons and playing well together at break times.

- Attendance is better than in most school, partly because pupils want to come to school. They expect lessons to be lively and interesting and older pupils in particular value the way they are treated and the responsibilities they are given. There is a very good balance between the natural exuberance and playfulness that you would expect from children and the growing maturity and understanding of the consequences of actions that is developed as they grow older.
- Behaviour is very good. At the time of the last inspection there were problems in some classes, linked to unsatisfactory teaching. This is no longer the case. Pupils know what is expected of them and the consistent approach taken by all adults helps to reenforce the message and avoid misunderstandings. As a result teachers rarely have to give out punishment and there is a pleasant and positive atmosphere in the school.

Leadership is very effective

- The headteacher has led the school very successfully for some 18 years. He has established a clear vision for what the school should be like and has worked consistently towards achieving it over the years. During this time standards have been high and have risen. As a result of his leadership the school has responded very positively to all of the changes following on from the introduction of the National Curriculum, by assimilating them into its existing ways of working rather than adopting them uncritically as something entirely new. More recently the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been established thoughtfully in the school, after considerable consultation with teachers about the best ways of adapting the existing practice. He has also established effective administrative and management procedures so that the school runs smoothly and teachers are not diverted from their work in the classrooms.
- Other management tasks are devolved appropriately amongst the staff. The deputy headteacher provides good support as well as carrying out the responsibilities of coordinating the provision for special educational needs effectively. Subject co-ordinators all carry out their work well and the co-ordinators for English and mathematics have been particularly successful in establishing agreed ways of working in these subjects.
- Work in the school is monitored carefully. The headteacher's monitoring of teachers as part of the appraisals scheme led to early developments in the deployment of teachers and the quality of work in classrooms. This has now developed into performance management, with a wide range of information, including pupils' work, being used to recognise the strengths within the school and build on them to make things even better. Subject co-ordinators are now involved in assessing how well their subjects are being taught and providing support when necessary. Governors are also involved in the process. They are well informed of the school's progress through reports at meetings and presentations made to them by staff. They strengthen this understanding through first-hand experience in the school, including an annual monitoring day.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school has no significant weaknesses; more use could be made of assessment to help pupils do even better

- The school has a well-established assessment system for the core subjects of English, mathematic and science. Pupils' levels of attainment are recorded as they come into the school and then their progress is charted each year from the tests they take. These results are compared with predictions of the progress that would be expected from the earlier scores. In this way pupils who are likely to fall behind are identified and extra support is provided. The information is also used to place pupils into teaching groups for English and mathematics so that the work can be matched more closely to their needs. These setting arrangements have been further extended in Year 6 to provide extra support for those pupils who were just in reach of a higher level. It was particularly successful in helping pupils reach level 5 in the mathematics test in 2000.
- 18 This successful assessment system could be further strengthened in three ways: -

Extending it to other subjects

At the moment the assessment system concentrates on pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science and much of the information comes from the results of tests. Now that the school has adapted the national guidance for non-core subjects, there is a clear framework in all of the other subjects against which assessments can be made. Much, if not all, of these assessments could be based on what the pupils produce in the lessons, rather than setting any more tests. Some of the assessed material could be discussed by staff to agree the level of work it represents and this process would strengthen teachers' understanding of the subject and help to focus on what pupils need to do to move forwards.

Identifying particular strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and setting them targets to improve

The current system aggregates assessment information, largely from tests, and accurately identifies the level at which each pupil is working. This information has been used very effectively, for example to identify that many pupils' writing was not as good as their reading. Consequently the teaching approach was altered and this resulted in the very high English results in 2000. However, the system does not show the sort of problems that individual pupils may be finding in a subject, for example understanding the use of brackets in mathematics. This information could come from an analysis of performance in particular questions in a test or from marking pupils mathematics work. Once it has been recognised, it could be identified as a special target for the pupil to work on and for the teacher and other staff to support. Pupils are already responding well to this approach in Year 7 and pupils throughout the school have the maturity and sense of purpose to reflect on their learning in this way.

Identifying aspects of a subject which many pupils find difficult and adjusting the way they are taught appropriately.

21 The information gathered to set targets could also be analysed to see if there are aspects that many pupils find difficult or that pupils in one particular group have not learnt.

This can then be used as the starting point to find out why the problem has arisen and to explore ways of improving pupils' learning in that area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22 In order to improve the quality of education even further, staff and governors should:-

Develop the existing, successful, assessment system further in order to

- collect information about pupils performance in other subjects in addition to English, mathematics and science;
- use the assessment information to analyse the performance of individual pupils and set closely focused targets for improvement. This is already happening in Year 7 and should be extended to other years;
- involve pupils in analysing their own work, setting targets and reviewing their progress;
- include more references to targets and ways pupils could improve in the comments teachers make on pupils' work. Some teachers already do this effectively, but it is not uniform practice.

(see paragraphs 19, 20, 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	25	50	21	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	269
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	73

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	29	32	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	28	24	28
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	30	29	30
	Total	58	53	58
Percentage of pupils	School	95 (89)	87 (81)	95 (95)
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	28	24	28
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	30	29	30
	Total	58	53	58
Percentage of pupils	School	95 (89)	87 (81)	98 (96)
at NC level 4 or above	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	266
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black - Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black - other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 - Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: Y4 - Y7

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	62

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total aggregate hours worked per week n/a	Total number of education support staff	n/a
	Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000	
	£	
Total income	516633	
Total expenditure	502606	
Expenditure per pupil	1802	
Balance brought forward from previous year	14918	
Balance carried forward to next year	28945	

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	269
Number of questionnaires returned	193

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	58	8	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	56	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	67	2	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	60	14	7	0
The teaching is good.	40	55	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	57	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	9	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	49	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	22	55	19	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	39	56	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	60	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	7	38	32	11	12

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Eighteen parents added comments to their questionnaires. Most of these amplified their responses to the questions. Three expressed concerns about pupils settling into the school in Year 4. Pupils themselves say that moving from a very small school is a big change, but the problems are very quickly resolved. However, the school is looking for ways to make the transition even easier.