



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**Woodbridge Junior School**

**Derbyshire Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 28-29 June 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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## Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Woodbridge Junior School
Type of school:	Junior
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mr J Mash
Address of school:	Grange Street Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 7JA
Telephone:	01773 833138
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Kerry
Local education authority area:	Derbyshire
Unique reference number:	112494
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr A Gray HMI
Dates of inspection:	28-29 June 2004

## Introduction

1. Woodbridge Junior School is situated in Alfreton, Derbyshire. This is a small town in a former mining area with above average levels of unemployment. The school has 162 pupils on roll, which is very small compared to other junior schools; most pupils have previously attended a nearby infant school. The profile of the local population is changing and pupil numbers are expected to fall to 132 in September 2004. None of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Thirty per cent of the pupils have designated special educational needs, which is above the national average and almost double the proportion for five years ago. These figures include just over four per cent of the pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is well above the national figure. Twenty nine per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average.
2. The school was inspected in October 2002. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of October 2002. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on five occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In June 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
    - overall, the pupils' standards of attainment are below the national expectations. Standards are rising in each year group, though this was not reflected in the school's results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2003, nor in the provisional results in English in 2004;
    - most of the pupils now make satisfactory or better progress in English, mathematics and science; they make good progress in Year 4. Progress in reading is good in Year 3;
    - the pupils' attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better in all lessons and good in two fifths. Pupils responded readily to interesting and challenging work but on some occasions groups of pupils did not sustain their motivation and became too passive. Their behaviour in lessons is good. Behaviour around the school as a whole is satisfactory and the pupils have sound relationships with adults and with each other. However, the rate of fixed-term exclusion is too high, especially in Year 6;
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- the pupils' attendance, at 92 per cent so far this school year, is unsatisfactory, and well below the school's target of 95 per cent. Strategies for raising attendance are not as effective as they should be. A small number of the pupils arrive late for school in the mornings;
  - provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is too varied. Their social and moral development is satisfactory with some strengths, but the provision for spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. The school does not meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall and is good when the teaching strategies allow for more challenging situations. The staff provide the pupils with good care and support;
  - the quality of teaching is good; it was satisfactory or better in nine tenths of the lessons, including two thirds in which it was good;
  - the quality of learning is satisfactory overall. The pupils made satisfactory progress in all but one of the lessons and good progress in half of them. The pupils are becoming more effective learners because the teachers set higher demands; for example, by expecting them to use their independent learning skills and revise their own work;
  - the curriculum is satisfactory. Provision for English and mathematics is good and for science it is satisfactory. There are, however, weaknesses in some other subjects because the continuity of learning is weak;
  - the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. The management of special educational needs provision by the co-ordinator is sound. The pupils make good progress because documentation is maintained well and is regularly reviewed, learning support assistants are well managed by class teachers and work productively with pupils, and there is an appropriate range of teaching strategies;
  - procedures for assessing the pupils' development in the core subjects and for tracking their progress are good. The school has set up a secure system which identifies targets for individual pupils and for setting whole-school targets based on the pupils' prior attainment. Their progress is carefully monitored and analysed. A good system of marking, including the use of individual and group targets, helps the pupils to make progress in English, mathematics and science;
  - the leadership of the headteacher is good and he is an effective manager. He has set a clear educational agenda for the school's development and enabled significant improvements in the procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own work;
  - the leadership and management of other key staff are good. They are able to contribute to improvement through a common vision for the school, a shared commitment to the raising of standards and the consistent application of good policies based upon strong professional collaboration between all staff;
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- there are good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, scrutinising the pupils' work, analysing test data and checking the teachers' planning. The school keeps good assessment records which are used to analyse its own performance;
- the school's income per pupil is broadly average. The level of staffing is good; the school spends a higher than average proportion of its income on teaching and educational support staff, but a much lower proportion on resources. Resources are adequate overall to support the curriculum being provided, but too little to provide for curriculum development. The quality of the learning environment is good, except for a temporary classroom which offers unsuitable accommodation;
- the work of the governing body and of the chair of governors is good. The minutes of recent governing body meetings show a considerable improvement in the effectiveness with which governors engage the headteacher in a debate about the school's improvement;
- the local education authority (LEA) has provided good support to the school through arranging temporary leadership, continuing to fund enhanced staffing, supporting work to improve the quality of teaching and by the deployment of experienced personnel to help raise standards.

### **Key issues**

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards of attainment in all subjects;
- improve the pupils' attendance;
- raise the profile of spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development in the curriculum and the wider life of the school.

### **Inspection findings**

#### **Standards achieved by the pupils**

7. On entry to the school, the pupils' standards of attainment are above the national average. However, this has not always been the case and the legacy of previous low achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics, is still evident in the older year groups. Overall, the pupils' standards of attainment remain below the national expectations across the school. This was reflected in the 2003 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, where 68 per cent of the pupils attained the expected Level 4 or above in English and science, and 53 per cent did so in mathematics. In comparison with schools nationally, the standards attained by the pupils in the 2003 Key Stage 2 national tests were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, the standards attained were average in

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English and well below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with schools with pupils who attained similar standards at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were above average in English, below it in mathematics and well below in science. Provisional figures for the 2004 national tests show that standards have remained the same in English, but have risen sharply in science.

8. The pupils' learning in lessons was satisfactory overall. They made satisfactory progress in all but one of the lessons and good progress in half of them. The pupils are becoming more effective learners because teachers are expecting them to use their independent learning skills. They made best progress where the teachers set high expectations for their contribution to lessons and required them to work independently and revise their work. Their progress was weakest when whole-class teaching lasted for long periods and the pupils were not kept fully involved.

9. Over time, most of the pupils make satisfactory or better progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The pupils make good progress in reading in Year 3, where the standard of reading is above average. The school does not expect to meet all of its targets for standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 6. The progress made by the pupils who have special educational needs is good.

10. Standards in English are generally below national expectations, especially in reading in Year 5, although most of the pupils are now making appropriate progress. By the end of Year 6 most pupils show an understanding of the conventions required for different types of writing. Most have a grasp of complex sentence structure and can combine narrative and dialogue. Despite this, standards of spelling and punctuation are weak and some pupils do not consistently check their own work even for basic errors. Although most of the pupils listen carefully, standards of speaking are below expectations because in some classes the pupils do not speak formally in full sentences. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking where the teachers use a series of questions to lead them into providing a fuller answer.

11. In mathematics, standards overall are below those expected for the pupils' ages and prior attainment. In lessons, however, many pupils were working towards appropriate levels for their ages. They are developing mathematical concepts, beginning to use mathematics competently in a variety of contexts, and make sound use of technical language. They apply their mathematical skills to solving simple problems. Work based on the National Numeracy Strategy is helping pupils to improve their recall of number facts and to calculate and estimate with increasing accuracy.

12. Standards in science are satisfactory overall and have improved sharply in Year 6. The pupils are developing their scientific understanding through carrying out and evaluating scientific investigations using simple apparatus; they are beginning to show a good awareness of the implications and applications of science in everyday life. The pupils, especially the most able ones, are willing to speculate about scientific problems and look for patterns in their results using an appropriate range of numeracy skills. They are excited by science and show a spirit of enquiry.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

13. The pupils' attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better in all lessons and good in two fifths. Pupils responded readily to interesting and challenging work but on occasions

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some groups of pupils did not sustain their motivation and became too passive. Their behaviour in lessons is good. Behaviour around the school as a whole is satisfactory and the pupils have sound relationships with adults and with each other. The pupils behaved well during assembly. However, the rate of fixed-term exclusion, 57 so far during the current school year, remains too high, especially in Year 6.

14. The level of care and support for the pupils from the teachers and the teaching assistants is good. The level of care and support provided at break and lunch time is also good.

15. The school places strong emphasis on moral and social development; provision in these areas is strengthening and is satisfactory overall. Pupils know and understand the policy of rewards and sanctions, which is implemented consistently. There are, however, no procedures through which pupils can become systematically involved in the life and work of the school. Overall, the pupils' personal development is satisfactory but shows the potential to be much better when the pupils are placed in more challenging situations.

16. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The school does not meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship; important opportunities for quiet reflection during the whole-school assembly were lost. The pupils' spiritual appreciation of life is underdeveloped. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and show respect to adults and to one another. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural awareness; for example, through their work in the foundation subjects and educational visits.

17. The pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. The levels of attendance have fluctuated during the last three years and show a downward trend. The overall level of attendance during this school year to date is 92 per cent, which is low, and well below the school's target of 95 per cent. However, when the impact of the small number of persistently poor attending pupils is taken into account, the underlying trend is one of steady improvement. The school analyses its attendance, exclusion and punctuality data, and is well supported by the educational welfare service in its work with parents. Good attendance and punctuality are celebrated and appropriately rewarded. Punctuality to lessons is good; pupils arrive at lessons ready and willing to learn, with high expectations of their teachers. Punctuality to school, although not yet good enough, is improving steadily, mainly because of a determined effort by staff and the increasing co-operation of parents.

### **The quality of education**

18. The quality of teaching is good. It was at least satisfactory in nine tenths of the lessons, including two thirds in which it was good. The quality of teaching has improved steadily to a good standard overall. Most lessons are well planned with tasks that are appropriately matched to the needs of the pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants work hard and with determination. They have responded well to a rigorous programme of monitoring and put into practice what has been learned on training courses. The teachers' implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has been thorough.

19. The use of a common format for planning the curriculum has improved the teaching and learning. Much effective work has been undertaken to review and improve curriculum guidance and planning. A curriculum overview maps out the content for the year and a framework gives greater detail for each half-term in each subject. The medium-term planning

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sets out learning objectives, and weekly plans show what is to be accomplished in each lesson. Teachers work well together and pool their ideas and resources. However, the experiences of some pupils in the foundation subjects, for example in the humanities and music, are not sufficiently consistent within and between year groups because of the long gaps between units of work.

20. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment in the core subjects and for tracking their progress. This information provides a secure basis for identifying targets for individual pupils and for setting group targets in some subjects. In some classes, pupils are starting to evaluate the quality of their own work. Marking is often good in English and mathematics, especially where it provides guidance to help the pupils improve. However, the pupils are less well-informed about their progress in other subjects.

21. Provision in English is good. The quality of the teaching in English was at least satisfactory in the six lessons seen and it was good in five of them. The teachers have a good understanding of literacy. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used very effectively by some teachers to support improvement in areas such as punctuation. The co-ordinator of English has established good systems for assessing the pupils' progress and has been able to use these to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching, which she is addressing. The work is generally accurately matched to the needs of the pupils, although in one lesson a group was diverted from the main learning objectives for guided reading and therefore made less secure progress than the other groups. The pupils are well informed about what they need to do to improve in lessons where their literacy targets are easily accessible; however, this approach was not consistent in all classes so that in some lessons the pupils had only a very general understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

22. Provision for mathematics is good overall; the quality of teaching in mathematics was good in three lessons and unsatisfactory in one. Some whole-class teaching lasted too long, but in most lessons the work was well matched to the needs of the pupils and reflected good use of assessment information.

23. Provision for science is satisfactory overall, which enables the pupils to gain broad and accurate knowledge across the National Curriculum programmes of study, commensurate with their ages and abilities. The quality of teaching in science was good in two of the three lessons, and satisfactory in the other lesson.

24. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Most work is carried out by class teachers under the capable supervision of the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The in-class support provided by learning support assistants is well managed and very productive; it is a strength of the school. The targets within the pupils' individual education plans are mostly practical and manageable. The pupils' progress is reviewed regularly by teachers and learning support assistants, and parents are involved where appropriate.

25. The quality of the learning environment is good. Classrooms are bright and well organised for learning. The temporary classroom is barely suitable for its purpose and does not adapt well to situations where the pupils are required to sit on the carpet. In some classrooms a lack of storage space can lead to them being unnecessarily cluttered. Resources are generally adequate overall; in one religious education lesson, there were no suitable

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resources available to capture the pupils' interest at the start of the lesson. However, the level of resourcing is inadequate to support curriculum development.

26. The school, through a range of initiatives, is strengthening its links with the local community; for example, by mounting a display of pupils' work in the nearby council library, providing a carol concert for senior citizens, and making available its facilities to local people for fitness training and football practice. The school actively seeks pupils' and parents' views of the school and acts quickly on the findings; for instance, by providing a greater range of activities in order to stem unsociable behaviour by a small minority of pupils during lunchtimes, and by improving the quality of pupils' induction experience in Year 3 through strengthening links with the school's two main feeder infant schools.

### **Leadership and management**

27. The headteacher's leadership and management are good. He has set an effective educational agenda for the school's development. He has led significant improvements in the school's ability to monitor and evaluate its own work, and he is now developing a greater sense of the school's longer-term direction.

28. The leadership and management of other key staff are good. Most are relatively new to their posts. They are able to contribute to the school's improvement through a common vision for the school, a shared commitment to the raising of standards, the consistent application of good policies, and strong professional collaboration which extends to all staff.

29. The school had a budget surplus in the last financial year; if this is included in the budget for the current year, the school's income is broadly average. Its income per pupil is now closer to the national figure because the budget share has been increased and the number of pupils on roll is set to fall. A strategic decision has been made to invest heavily in teaching, as a result of which the school is well staffed. The ratio of pupils to teachers is a little over twenty to one, which is much more generous than the national figure and will be more so from September when the school will be smaller. However, the school's spending on educational resources is less than three per cent of its income, which is low, and the expenditure per pupil is much lower than the national figure. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

30. The work of the governing body is good. It has been an effective partner in the school's improvement and the chair of governors has made a valuable contribution to the leadership of the school. The governing body makes appropriate efforts to hold the headteacher to account. Governors make scheduled visits to the school in order to monitor progress and to keep themselves informed.

31. The LEA has provided good support to the school through arranging temporary leadership and staffing during the last two years, and through work to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards. It has made a major contribution in helping to analyse the effectiveness of the teaching and in its regular reports. It has given the school additional financial support to improve its ICT resources, to cover some of the costs of an additional teacher, and the cost of an additional teaching assistant.

## **Implementation of the action plan**

32. The inspection report of October 2002 required the school to address three key issues. These principally related to: improving the standards in literacy and numeracy; improving the quality of teaching; and continuing to develop the effectiveness of the senior management team. Overall reasonable progress has been made.

33. Standards in literacy and numeracy have started to rise significantly, although this has not yet led to improved results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6. Standards continue to be held back where pupils do not have a consistent approach to checking the accuracy of their work. The quality of teaching has improved and the proportion of good teaching has more than doubled. The work of the senior management team has improved significantly and all of its members are now contributing effectively to the school's improvement.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

In October 2002 the school was inspected by HMI under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in March, July and November 2003, and in February 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of October 2002.

In June 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Seventeen lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and curriculum co-ordinators. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of October 2002 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.