



Inspection report

# Woodcote Primary School

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 120096  
LEA Leicestershire

Inspection number 273064  
Inspection dates 23 and 24 February 2005  
Reporting inspector Mrs L Murphy, Additional Inspector

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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Type of School	Primary	School address	Willowbrook Close
School category	Community		Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Age range of pupils	5 to 11 years		Leicestershire
			LE65 1JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 417007
Number on roll	102	Fax number	01530 412712
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Reverend D Flower
Date of previous inspection	June 2004	Headteacher	Mrs J Kilgour

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<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11 years	<b>Published</b> 1 April 2005	<b>Reference no.</b> 273064
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## Introduction

When Woodcote Primary School was inspected in June 2004, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school in February 2005 to monitor its progress.

### Description of the school

Woodcote Primary School is situated close to the centre of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Most of the 102 pupils live nearby and come from a range of social backgrounds. The school is smaller than average. All of the pupils are of white British heritage. Twenty four per cent of the pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals and 25 per cent of the pupils are on the school's list of pupils who have special educational needs. These figures are above the national average. Six per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is well above the national average. The pupils' attainment when they start the school in the reception year is below the level typically expected for their age. During the inspection the headteacher was absent due to ill health. An officer of the local education authority (LEA) was present to provide support to the associate headteacher.

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

### **Effectiveness of the school**

The leadership and management of the school are weak and as a result the school lacks direction. Standards at Year 6 are well below the national average in English and mathematics and below the national average in science. At Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below the national average. Substantial underachievement is evident in Year 1 to Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. The pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to work and attendance are satisfactory.

### **Improvement since the last inspection**

The school has made insufficient progress towards resolving the serious weaknesses identified in June 2004 relating to the leadership and management, in particular, and to the quality of teaching and learning. Improvements have been made in the rate of attendance and in managing the pupils' behaviour, although a significant minority of boys misbehave.

### **Capacity to improve**

Management systems lack rigour and there is an absence of detailed monitoring and critical evaluation. This in part has led to standards at the end of Year 6 being below the national trend since 2000 in the school's results for English, mathematics and science. The subject leadership of English and mathematics is unsatisfactory. The governors manage the budget soundly but have found it difficult to hold the school to account for the quality of education it provides because of a lack of reliable information.

The chair of governors clearly wants to work with the school in an open and professional manner to secure improvement. The recently appointed assistant headteacher has the respect of staff and a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Teaching staff work hard and are committed to the school and want to bring about improvement. In these respects the school has a good capacity to improve despite the legacy of a lack of clear leadership and rigorous systems for management which have impeded the school's progress.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

The school's development plan recognises the areas where improvement is needed. However the key priorities are to:

- raise standards and improve the pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science;

- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels;
- improve the quality of teaching.

## Achievement and standards

At the end of Year 6 the school's results in the national tests in 2004 were well below the national average in English and mathematics. In science they were below average. With help from the LEA the school has analysed the test results but has not taken sufficient action to address the weaknesses. In comparison with schools where a similar proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, the results were well below average in mathematics, below average in English and average in science. At Year 6 the pupils' progress over time was well below the national average in English and mathematics and below average in science. These results represent considerable underachievement from the broadly average level when the pupils start school in the reception year.

At the end of Year 2 the school's national test results have been well below average over the last four years in reading, writing and mathematics. In the tests in 2004 the school's results showed that too few pupils attained at a high level; for example, in writing no pupils achieved at a high level, compared with 16 per cent nationally. A higher proportion than nationally failed to achieve securely at the expected level. When the school's results were compared with similar schools they were well below average in reading and below in writing. The school is aware that the standards achieved by the boys at Year 2 are much lower than those achieved by the girls but the difference in performance has not been tackled.

Pupils enter the reception year with below average skills in communication, language and literacy and underdeveloped social skills. Many of the pupils speak in incomplete sentences and not all are confident to ask for the help they need to complete simple tasks. Many are in the early stages of reading and writing. Most of the pupils are on course to reach a level below that typically expected by the end of the reception year.

Standards observed in lessons were below average in the reception year and mostly well below the expected levels for the pupils' ages in Year 2 and Year 6.

## Personal development

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the inspection in June 2004 and are satisfactory overall. Most pupils comply with instructions and are polite and friendly. They show respect towards adults and are often supportive of each other. Their behaviour in assembly, at lunchtime and playtime was mainly sensible and responsible. Although most pupils enjoy school, their attitudes to learning are passive. They lack self-confidence and many are reticent about speaking aloud in class. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in 12 lessons and unsatisfactory in three. The number of fixed-term exclusions has been reduced from five in 2004 to one so far this year.

The teachers are mostly consistent in their approach to discipline because the school's policy has been reviewed and staged procedures have been introduced to deal with misbehaviour. This has led to a considerable improvement in the pupils' ability to sustain their attention and interest in lessons. Even when teachers' introductions to lessons were over-long, the pupils were patient and retained their concentration. Many worked together well and persevered with the tasks set. However, there was a significant minority of pupils, mostly boys, who found it difficult to sit still and concentrate on their work. These pupils sometimes disrupted the learning of other pupils by their poor behaviour and the school has not yet got to grips with this problem.

The pupils who have special educational needs and behavioural difficulties are too often withdrawn from main class activities and are taught separately by support staff. This sometimes results in noisy sessions taking place near the main class teaching, making it harder for other pupils to maintain their concentration. The withdrawn pupils miss out on learning how to behave and pay attention in a whole class group. However, some skilled help from the leader of special educational needs and the introduction of pastoral support programmes for pupils who need them have been successful in modifying behaviour and allowing pupils to be successfully re-integrated into the full class.

As a result of concerted action by the school to better involve parents, the pupils' attendance has improved to a satisfactory level. It has been 95 per cent last term and so far this term. Punctuality has improved and is satisfactory.

The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. Staff act as good role models and treat pupils with courtesy and respect. The school is part of the Healthy School Scheme and displays around the school reinforce important messages about behaviour, healthy living and a sense of belonging.

Provision for the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and know why their school rules are important. At lunchtimes and playtimes, pupils play well together and there is a range of after-school activities which encourage co-operation. Pupils are tolerant of the poor behaviour of a minority of boys. Assemblies have moral themes and allow time for reflection but, across the school, there are many missed opportunities for pupils to think about, and wonder at, the real world, or experience a variety of cultures.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory overall. It was good in three lessons, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in five. This is a poorer picture than that reported in 2004. The proportion of good or better teaching was lower than found nationally. The rate of the pupils' learning was linked very closely to the quality of teaching. The pupils were interested in their tasks but their ability to work at a good pace was unsatisfactory. The majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6 were complacent and accepting of what was provided. As a result they were not always fully productive and the pace of their

independent work was frequently slow. Most pupils wanted to learn but the pupils' concentration was adversely affected by a minority of boys who misbehaved and caused noise which travelled to adjacent teaching areas. These pupils' poor work habits consumed too much of the teachers' time.

The teaching and learning were good where lessons were brisk and challenging. Relationships were good and the pupils' behaviour was managed well through praise linked to their learning. Books and artefacts were used well to engage the pupils' interest and thirst for learning and to promote their skills of enquiry. In a good English lesson, for example, in a mixed class of pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 the pupils made rapid progress in creating profiles of characters for a traditional tale. They had models of mythical creatures and knights in armour for reference and used some powerful adjectives to describe the feelings and appearance of particular characters.

Common weaknesses in the teaching and learning included low expectations of what the pupils could achieve, often linked with a slow pace, that at times, was determined by the pupils. When the pupils were kept seated for long periods the balance of time to different parts of the lesson was skewed, leaving too little time for practical and independent work.

The use of assessment is underdeveloped and as a result the use of data to inform teaching is unsatisfactory. The higher attaining pupils are underachieving because assessment is not used to match work to their needs or to track their progress effectively. The individual educational plans for the pupils who have special educational needs were of good quality but were not used well enough to guide the teaching when small groups of pupils were withdrawn from the main lessons.

The curriculum in the reception year is satisfactory. The pupils have a varied range of soundly planned activities and good use is made of the outside environment to enhance their learning. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a reasonable range of practical tasks to engage the pupils' interest. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, the quality of planning is unsatisfactory because it does not make clear the match of tasks to the pupils' level of attainment. This leads to the higher attainers underachieving in subjects such as art and design and music.

Accommodation is satisfactory overall but it is not used to best advantage for the teaching groups. Noise easily travels from one teaching area to another and adversely affects the teaching and learning in adjacent areas. The deployment of teaching assistants to work with small groups of pupils out of the classroom is unsatisfactory.

The care and support of the pupils are satisfactory and pastoral care overall is good.

## Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is weak. Where whole school policies exist, they are not translated consistently into practice and are not monitored effectively. The school's management systems lack rigour and, as a result, staff have been left with little clear

direction and a lack of clarity about what is expected of them. For example, it is only very recently that a first step has been taken towards meeting the requirements for managing the performance of teachers.

The governing body has not monitored the school's progress against its action plan with sufficient rigour. Their work has been impeded, however, by a lack of reliable information upon which to make judgements. The budget is managed satisfactorily.

The leadership of the headteacher has been ineffective, and has held back the school's progress. Communication has been poor and unreliable. These factors have at times led to unsatisfactory professional relationships and a high turnover of staff. The subject leadership of English and mathematics has lacked direction and rigour. Despite these circumstances the contribution being made by the newly appointed assistant headteacher to the school's leadership is marked by improved teamwork and a faster response to day-to-day issues.

The co-ordination and management of special educational needs are satisfactory with some good aspects. The pupils' individual educational plans are clear and provide a series of precise achievable targets. These are readily available for reference and teachers record the outcomes at the end of lessons. Behavioural plans for those pupils who require them are equally helpful in diagnosing what needs to be done to help the individuals. However, in practice these are not implemented well enough to improve the pupils' behaviour.

The quality of monitoring is poor. There is little to show that the quality of teaching and learning has been checked internally. Curricular planning has not been thoroughly checked, often resulting in a lack of challenging tasks for the higher attainers. Self-evaluation is weak.

Issues central to the school's weakness have not been tackled well enough. Difficulties with communication have impaired the quality of some of the relationships between the headteacher and staff. Not all staff recognise the urgency of improving the pupils' achievement while others have been hindered in their hard work because the headteacher has failed to ensure adherence to the timescale for addressing the weakness. Some proposed actions have not been tackled and others have had little impact. The progress of many pupils has been slow because fundamental improvement has not occurred. The overall impact of initiatives on the quality of education has been limited, although the improvements in attendance and pupils' behaviour mean that on the whole the pupils are ready to learn.

The LEA has met its commitment to the school as set out in its statement of action. However, the impact of the support and training has been negligible in many respects because it has not been sufficiently professionally received by the school and recommendations have not always been followed through. The LEA allowed the school's lack of improvement to persist for too long. However, during the initial absence of the headteacher the LEA acted quickly to ensure that an officer of the LEA was in the school to support the assistant headteacher. Prompt action was also taken in securing the services of an experienced headteacher to lead the school in the medium term.

## Appendix – Information about the inspection

Woodcote Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in June 2004. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses.

The school was visited by an HMI and an Additional Inspector in February 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of June 2004. The inspection was carried out 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.

During the visit 15 lessons or parts of lessons, two registration periods and three assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the associate headteacher, middle managers for assessment, English and special educational needs, the chair of governors and a representative of the LEA. There were informal discussions with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and areas for improvement in the inspection report of June 2004 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those identified areas.





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