



Woolaston Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115559
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279626
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector Graham Sims RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Netherend
School category	Community		Woolaston
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6PH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01594 529270
Number on roll	195	Fax number	01594 529270
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Graham Horton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 19 September 2005 - 20 September 2005	Inspection number 279626
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Woolaston Primary School is an average sized primary school with 202 boys and girls on roll. Almost all pupils are from a white British background and speak English as their first language. A below average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most children have attended a playgroup or nursery before they join the school and arrive with above average personal and social skills. Overall, however, their attainment on entry is average, as their early reading, writing and mathematical skills are less well developed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly above the national average. There have been significant changes in the senior leadership of the school in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Woolaston Primary School provides a sound education for its pupils with some good features which are appreciated by parents and result in pupils greatly enjoying their time at school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Pupils make steady progress in English, mathematics and science and their personal development is good. Children make good progress in the reception class, and their standards are above average by the time they start Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 6, teachers cover what they are expected to teach, but do not always move pupils on as quickly as they could. This is because they rely too heavily on prescribed schemes of work rather than on their assessments of how well pupils are doing. In addition, they miss opportunities to develop pupils' key skills when teaching subjects other than English and mathematics. Pupils are not always given clear enough indications as to how they could improve their work.

Throughout the school, the staff provide a good standard of care and a wide range of additional activities setting high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils develop into considerate, polite youngsters, who enjoy coming to school.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has united and motivated staff and has good ideas for developing the school further. Some initiatives have already brought improvement, demonstrating the school's capacity to improve. Other initiatives are focused on the key issues the school needs to improve, but have not been in place long enough for their impact to be seen. The school's view of its own performance is slightly more positive than the inspection evidence shows, which reflects the fact that staff are not yet experienced in evaluating the school's and their own performance.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- take greater account of assessment information to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged
- ensure consistent practice in the marking of pupils' work, which enables pupils to understand more clearly what they are doing well, where they are making mistakes and what they need to do to improve
- raise pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by using opportunities to teach and consolidate literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects
- improve the school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures and involve all staff in the process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the reception class. They get off to a flying start because they settle in to school life very quickly. The school pays good attention to developing their independence, with the result that children take a full part in their learning and enjoy the challenges of learning to read and write. By the time they start Year 1, most children have reached, and many have progressed beyond, the learning goals expected for their age.

Since the last inspection, pupils have made generally satisfactory progress achieving standards at age 7 in reading, writing and mathematics which have been either above or close to the national average. Results in writing in 2004, particularly of the more able pupils, were of some concern, but the school responded with positive measures to bring significant improvements in both reading and writing in 2005. The standards achieved by the pupils who have just moved into Year 3 are the highest for the last six years and represent good progress.

Standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science have remained stable and for most of the last five years, have been above the national average, representing satisfactory progress.. The school has improved English results in 2005 as a result of a successful focus on improving boy's writing. However, lower results in mathematics in 2005 show that whilst their achievement is satisfactory, pupils are not making as much progress in this subject as in English and science. The school exceeded its targets in English, but did not quite reach them in mathematics in 2005.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least satisfactory and often good progress because of the extra support they receive. The school is now focusing extra attention on other pupils who are not achieving the standards expected for their age. However, this initiative has not yet had sufficient time to bring a noticeable improvement for these pupils.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school gives very good attention to pupils' personal development and well-being, and makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. The ethos of the school is friendly and supportive. Pupils gain a good understanding of right and wrong and of how to care for one another. Relationships are good, and pupils are courteous and polite. The residential trips for pupils in Years 3 to 6 are very successful in involving pupils in making choices and working together as a team. They build pupils' self-esteem and confidence well.

Pupils enjoy school and attendance is well above the national average. Pupils behave very well and show good attitudes to their work. They see the school as a friendly, safe and happy place. Bullying is very rare and pupils are confident that, should it

occur, it would be dealt with quickly. They are encouraged to take responsibility in their classes and through the school council. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these responsibilities, which help them develop skills that allow them to make a positive contribution to the wider community.

Pupils are encouraged very effectively to embrace healthy lifestyles. A 'Healthy Eating' programme has been successfully introduced, and the new school meals have proved a huge success. The good range of after-school sports activities are attended by most pupils in Years 3 to 6, and lessons in the school swimming pool are a big favourite.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of what they are required to teach and put things across in an interesting way to the pupils. They use resources well, and are making increasingly effective use of the interactive whiteboards which are now installed in most classrooms. There is good liaison with teaching assistants, who make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers manage their classes well, establishing a good rapport with the pupils and maintaining good discipline. All of this establishes a productive climate for learning, and pupils play their part by concentrating well and working hard. However, the teaching does not always move pupils on as quickly as it could. Sometimes, pupils spend too long practising the same thing; sometimes, the work is not quite challenging enough; and sometimes, opportunities are missed to develop or consolidate basic literacy and numeracy skills when teaching other subjects. The school continues to have good mechanisms for identifying and supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Recent improvements have been made to the way the school shares the information it has collected about how well pupils are doing. However, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of the information they have to influence their planning and to identify ways in which they might move pupils on more rapidly. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of marking varies from class to class, and there is not yet a common agreement on how to use the marking to enable pupils to learn from their mistakes.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Provision for children in the reception class is good and prepares them well for the next stage of learning. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is carefully planned to cover all required subjects, but teachers do not yet link work in one subject sufficiently well with what is happening in other subjects. The school has developed a good range of additional activities. These extend pupils' learning

and promote a good level of interest amongst the pupils. The school has recently purchased a minibus with the financial support of local businesses, and it is used well to take pupils out and increase their opportunities for learning. These experiences are also being used well as a stimulus to develop pupils' writing. Pupils say they enjoy the after-school activities, and particularly look forward to the residential trips. These activities give a rich range of challenging and enjoyable learning experiences beyond the formal curriculum.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school gives good attention to pupils' care, support and well-being. The standard of pastoral care is very good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together, for example, in the planning and evaluation of their teaching, and this is having a beneficial impact on the progress that pupils make. The school now sets targets for pupils' attainment for the end of each year, based on their current standards. This is helping teachers to focus more on the progress pupils need to make to achieve higher standards. However, the system is not yet fully developed and has not been operating long enough to have had an impact on raising standards.

There are good links with the local playgroup that has recently moved onto the school site. The added flexibility of these links is enabling children in the reception class to settle in very well. Pupils throughout the school feel valued and secure. Parents are pleased with the recent improvements to the security of the school and the good systems for keeping their children safe.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There are many good aspects to the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher is giving a clear sense of direction and purpose. He has been particularly successful in gaining the support of the staff and in getting them to work more collaboratively. The school's atmosphere is happy and purposeful, reflecting the headteacher's positive leadership and the commitment of the staff. Where initiatives have been running for a while, there has been demonstrable improvement in standards, such as the significant improvement in 2005 for all pupils in English. These improvements, and the eagerness with which staff are approaching future developments, indicate a good capacity for further improvement.

Governors have also had a significant input into a number of recent initiatives. Two attractive new classrooms and a school hall, better information and communication technology resources, improved security arrangements, better playground facilities,

vastly improved school lunch arrangements and the acquisition of a minibus have all had a positive impact on the quality of educational provision for the pupils.

The new management structure has been welcomed by staff, and more frequent staff meetings are helping them to improve their skills and understanding, and play a greater part in the school's development. However, staff are relatively inexperienced in evaluating their own and the school's performance. There are not yet enough opportunities for senior staff or those responsible for leading subjects to familiarise themselves with what is happening throughout the school. As a result, there are clear ideas about which areas need improvement, but not enough rigorous analysis of what must be done to make these areas better. The headteacher and senior staff have already identified the need to improve the school's assessment procedures, to bring greater consistency to the marking of pupils' work and to improve teachers' self-evaluation skills. However, because the school has only just started to tackle these areas, there has not been time for them to have an impact on pupils' achievement.

Grade: 3

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21st September 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed the chance to meet you and to talk to you and your teachers.

You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and that was evident in the way you worked hard in the lessons we observed, listened carefully to what your teachers said and had fun at break times. We were impressed that so many of you stayed behind after school for sports activities or to help with gardening. We were also impressed with the way you behaved and talked to us so politely. You said you particularly enjoyed school visits and the residential trips which take place in Years 3 to 6. We think these are a very good idea and are pleased you gain so much from them. It is good to see that so many of you are now enjoying healthy school lunches – we enjoyed them too – and that you know the importance of keeping fit.

Your teachers work hard to help you learn, and it is clear that nearly all of you are learning new skills each year. The headteacher and some of your teachers have good ideas about what to do to help you learn even more, and we agree with their ideas. We hope that they will soon put them into practice so that you do not spend quite so much time doing things you can already do, but use the time to learn new things. We have asked the teachers to help you understand more clearly what you have done well, where you have made mistakes and what you need to do to improve your work. We would like you and your teachers to remember that it is just as important to write correctly and well in your history, geography or science books as in your English books. Finally, we have suggested it would be a good idea for all teachers to see what is going on from time to time in other classes, so that they can contribute their thoughts on how to make things even better for you.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your school and to get the very best from the many things that it offers you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Graham Sims (Lead inspector)