



Woodcroft Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134677
Local Authority Barnet
Inspection number 282641
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Goldbeaters Grove
School category	Community		Edgware
Age range of pupils	3–11		HA8 0QF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02089593244
Number on roll (school)	407	Fax number	02089590736
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Kris Evans
		Headteacher	Mrs Sue Mills
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodcroft is a larger than average primary school. This new school opened in September 2004 after the amalgamation of Woodcroft Infants and Nursery and Woodcroft Junior Schools. The headteacher of Woodcroft Junior was appointed headteacher of the new school. Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with White British and Black African being the largest groups. Over a third of the pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. The school serves an area of social disadvantage and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average with language skills being particularly low. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal starting and leaving points is very high. Woodcroft Primary has not been inspected before.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Woodcroft Primary is a good school providing good quality education for all its pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well and their personal development is good.

Parents hold the school in high regard and one rightly commented, 'The headteacher and her teaching staff should be very proud of themselves in delivering good teaching and making school a fun place for our kids'.

Effective leadership and management are the key to the school's success. An experienced headteacher has led the new school with vision and strong direction. Staff from the former two schools, have united very well and an extremely positive climate has been created where teamwork among the staff is strong. All are committed to providing high quality education and care for the pupils. The school's vision, 'Together Towards Success' pervades the school. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Good leadership has resulted in consistently good teaching and learning and highly effective assessment procedures. Through rigorous self evaluation this school has a clear understanding of its performance and takes effective action to bring about improvements.

Outstanding, care guidance and support contribute significantly to both pupils' academic and personal development. Very good induction arrangements enable new pupils to settle quickly. In this harmonious school community all pupils thrive. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed and guidance and support for pupils with English as an additional language, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and gifted and talented are all good. Pupils clearly enjoy their education and have positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are often outstanding. Clear expectations and positive rewards give rise to good behaviour. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Improved Foundation Stage provision means that children in the Nursery and Reception classes are given a good start to their education. They make good progress in all areas of learning, but because of their low starting point not all reach expected standards by the time they move to Year 1. Facilities in the Foundation Stage, particularly outdoor play areas, are impressive. Good teaching and learning, and an effective curriculum results in all pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieving well. Very good assessment means that teachers know how well pupils are doing and they use this information well to match work to pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils develop speaking and listening skills well due to the good discussion opportunities provided. However, they do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in other subjects. Pupils are taught skills in information and communication technology (ICT) well but are not given enough opportunities to use these skills to help them learn in other subjects. National tests results for Year 6 were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science in 2005. Unconfirmed tests results for 2006 indicate below average standards, but this year group had a higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning difficulties.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Give more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills in a range of subjects.
- * Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's good progress in the Foundation Stage is effectively built on as pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Standards are generally below average by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6 and standards seen in the current Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The needs of English as additional language learners are identified swiftly, and effective support ensures they make good progress in acquiring English. Good levels of adult support ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have full access to activities and make good progress. Well-planned challenges for gifted and talented pupils help to ensure that they achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thrive in a very positive atmosphere. Outstanding relationships, clear expectations and a strong emphasis on praise successfully builds pupils' confidence and self esteem. Behaviour is good and pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils are courteous and friendly. Older ones are keen to take on responsibilities. For example, peer mediators and playground monitors show good social awareness ensuring that pupils are not left out of games and help solve problems swiftly. Members of the school council represent their classmates effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show respect for others. Cultural events such as 'Indian Dancing' and 'Black History Month' help pupils to understand and celebrate cultural diversity. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of a good diet and exercise. Their sound basic skills and responsible attitudes prepare them well for the next stage in their education. A Year 6 leaver wrote: 'The things I have learned at Woodcroft will help me to do well at my new school and to achieve better results in my GCSE.' The single weakness in an otherwise strong area is attendance, which is below average despite the school's on-going efforts to remedy the situation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a good blend of direct teaching and opportunities for children to explore. Teachers plan their lessons well and make them interesting. This motivates the pupils. As one pupil remarked, 'My teachers make learning fun'. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work, so speaking and listening skills are developing well. Assessment is effectively used to match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged, interested, and make good progress. Teachers direct their teaching assistants well. As a result they give good quality help to those who need it. This helps all pupils to join in fully and make good progress. Despite the many strengths in the teaching, increasing the range of writing offered to pupils is a recognised area for development. The pace in a few lessons is less brisk and this slows the rate of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An interesting and varied curriculum enables all groups of pupils to achieve well and make good progress in their personal development. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. It is also good for Years 1 to 6. There is good emphasis on teaching basic skills particularly speaking and listening. Planning does not map out enough opportunities for pupils apply and develop their writing skills across the curriculum, nor does it integrate the use of ICT into other subjects well enough.

Healthy lifestyles and staying safe are promoted well. Attractive displays reflect the interesting range of pupils' work. Good quality posters emphasising positive behaviour and the development of social skills contribute well to pupils' personal development. A good range of additional activities, visits and visitors enhance pupils' interest and enjoyment. After school clubs provide sporting, musical and artistic opportunities. Positive links with a local professional football club successfully promote pupils' literacy and numeracy as well as football skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All pupils are well-supported in their learning, helping them to make good progress. New pupils settle very quickly due to effective induction. As a parent of a recently arrived pupil commented, 'My child is now up with the other children in her year and has the confidence she was lacking before'. There are very good systems for keeping track of pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers use this information well to set challenging targets for pupils and to help them understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils are safe because there are robust procedures for ensuring their health and safety and for safeguarding their welfare. Rare incidents of unkind behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils' good achievement and their good personal development are the result of strong leadership and management. The very good leadership of the headteacher is much respected by pupils, staff, parents and governors. All pupils and staff are highly valued in very positive atmosphere. Members of staff have a 'can do attitude' and are committed to all pupils doing well despite the disadvantaged backgrounds of many. The deputy headteacher has been particularly effective in leading assessment and improvements to Foundation Stage provision. The role of subject leaders in English, mathematics, science and ICT are developing well and they are becoming more involved in monitoring achievement and provision. Monitoring in other subjects is less well developed.

The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is good. It has a clear understanding of what it does well and what could be improved. Improvement planning includes appropriate priorities. The effective monitoring and development of teaching ensures that outstanding practice is shared and that swift action is taken to remedy any shortcomings. As a result, teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. Successful assessment and tracking systems mean the school knows just how well individual pupils are doing. Improvements to assessment, teaching and learning across the school and the to the Foundation Stage curriculum demonstrate the school's good capacity for improvement. The governors are committed and well informed about the school's performance. They provide good support to the headteacher and staff.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found out. We think that Woodcroft is a good school and one you can be very proud of.

These things were particularly pleasing:

- * You thoroughly enjoy school and are enthusiastic about your learning.
- * Teaching is good and lessons are interesting. This is why you learn so much.
- * You are all making good progress.
- * Displays in school are attractive, bright and stimulating.
- * You are polite, friendly, and your behaviour is good.
- * You get on well with other pupils and adults.
- * Your headteacher runs the school extremely well.
- * Staff know you all very well. They give you excellent support and help.
- * There is a good range of clubs, visits, and visitors, which you clearly enjoy.
- * Your parents are pleased with the school.

There are a few things that we think could be improved:

- * You could make even more progress in writing if you have more opportunities to write when you are doing your work in different subjects.
- * Sometimes you could have more opportunities to use your ICT skills to help your learning in other subjects.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best for the future.

With kind regards,

Derek Watts

Lead inspector