



Woodcote Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120096
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 283985
Inspection dates 28 March 2006 to 29 March 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Brooker HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 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 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Willowbrook Close
School category	Community		Ashby-de-la-Zouch
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Leicestershire LE65 1JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 417007
Number on roll	100	Fax number	01530 412712
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Flower
Date of previous inspection	27 April 1998	Headteacher	Mrs Anne Pinnock

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5 to 11	28 March 2006 - 29 March 2006	283985

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodcote is a small primary school with significantly more boys than girls. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, reflecting the school's mixed urban catchment area. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also above average. The school is currently led by an interim headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school no longer requires special measures.

When the school was inspected just over a year ago it was judged to require special measures because of unsatisfactory teaching, significant underachievement and ineffective leadership and management. Since the last inspection the expert leadership of the two interim headteachers, combined with the hard work of the staff, has transformed the school. Leadership and management are now good. The school has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement and has good capacity for further improvement.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is satisfactory overall with notable strengths. The pupils make satisfactory and often good progress in lessons and over time. However, the legacy of underachievement means that the standards of the pupils' work are sometimes below where they should be, particularly in literacy. The school has set suitably challenging targets for this year, but short term targets, although developing well, are underused. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The school is well led and managed although the roles of the subject leaders need extending.

Inspectors agree broadly with the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has made rapid improvement over the last year and is developing significant strengths. It provides good care, guidance and support so that the pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress in their personal development.

The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school needs to focus on raising standards by:

- extending the use of short term targets to guide the pupils' progress
- strengthening pupils' literacy skills
- further developing the roles of subject leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In each class there is a wide range of ability. In general, however, many pupils in each year group have low levels of basic skills when they start school. In the past the school has not been effective in meeting the needs of all pupils and accelerating their progress. Standards of attainment in national tests in 2005 declined overall compared with previous years and were significantly below national average figures. The Year 2 pupils' results in reading and writing were well below average, although standards in mathematics were broadly average. Results at higher levels were below expectations.

Year 6 pupils' test results were below national averages in English, mathematics and science. Attainment at higher levels was also below average. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities made slightly better progress than other pupils.

The 2005 results represented inadequate achievement. However, it is clear from inspection evidence and the school's tracking information that the pupils now make satisfactory and often good progress in lessons and over time. A few pupils produce work that is of a high standard and some older pupils are articulate and write confidently. However, the legacy of underachievement means that standards of literacy and numeracy for a significant number of pupils are below those expected. In particular, many pupils do not speak and write accurately or fluently.

The children make a sound start in the Reception class. Most children in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach the expected levels across all aspects of their learning. They make particularly good progress in their social development. The school's own tracking of the progress made by the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils indicates that the challenging targets set for 2006 are likely to be met. The predicted results, if achieved in the tests, would represent a good level of progress and a significant increase in standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The improved climate for learning has had a marked effect on pupils' attitudes to school and pupils' enjoyment of their work. Behaviour is good in the classroom and around the school. This is partly due to the higher expectations that teachers have of pupils and the improvements made in matching work to pupils' needs and abilities. In addition, teachers and classroom assistants implement consistent and positive approaches to managing pupils' behaviour. Attendance has improved significantly and is around the national average. Exclusion is used very rarely, there have been no instances in the present academic year.

Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that the few incidents of unkind behaviour are dealt with quickly by staff. As one pupil said, "We are a friendly school and it is small enough to feel like a family here." Pupils are aware of healthy eating and drinking and about personal safety issues. The recently established school council is involved with discussions about improving school dinners and pupils run their own healthy eating snack bar. Pupils understand the importance of being physically active and enjoy a wide range of activities within the curriculum and as additional clubs.

Pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and have an awareness of the needs of others in the school and wider community. Assemblies draw upon religious and moral messages and celebrate success. The school recognises that pupils could be given wider opportunities for understanding cultural differences and for spiritual development within the curriculum.

There is a good range of clubs, visits and enrichment opportunities that are appreciated by the pupils. The school has recently provided more opportunities for pupils to take

on more responsibility, for example in the office and library. The pupils have risen to the challenge and are proud of their contributions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school's monitoring indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory with over half of lessons good or better. All lessons have good features. Teaching is well focused on what pupils with different abilities should achieve. There are good strategies for engaging the pupils and for developing their independent learning skills. Assessment information is effectively used to track the pupils' progress. Marking provides pupils with clear and specific guidance on what they do well and what they need to do to improve. Teachers are beginning to make good use of short term targets to guide the pupils' improvement but this needs to be extended.

The best teaching is well paced, sharply focused and builds well on the pupils' prior learning. In these lessons there is a good balance of teacher input and independent activities and the pupils' understanding is skilfully assessed and promoted through clever questioning. The quality of learning is at least satisfactory and often good. However, weaknesses in literacy (handwriting, speaking, listening and writing) are an impediment to more rapid progress for a significant number of pupils. In addition, although the challenging behaviour of a few younger pupils is very well managed, some individuals struggle to work independently or collaboratively. Teaching assistants are well informed and understand what different pupils should achieve. They are well deployed in lessons and provide good guidance and support for individual pupils and small groups. Classroom displays support learning well and create a positive environment for learning by effectively celebrating the pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is well matched to the ages and interests of the pupils and is suitably broad and balanced. Good procedures have been developed for reviewing and adapting the curriculum. For example, there has been a recent emphasis throughout the school on developing the pupils' personal and social skills because opportunities to develop these have not always been suitably planned. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good.

The school offers pupils a variety of activities to enhance the curriculum and works hard to broaden the pupils' experiences by offering a wide range of extracurricular provision and enrichment activities. The pupils enjoy the out of school clubs and activities offered including sports, art and gardening. There is a good range of visits and visiting speakers and opportunities for residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Arrangements for safeguarding children are secure. Accident records, risk assessment and health and safety checks are all in place. The level of care provided by adults on a day to day basis is very good. Staff are vigilant and aware of the correct procedures for child protection.

The pupils' academic progress is increasingly well tracked and action taken to remedy underachievement. Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for as learning is well matched to their differing needs and strengths.

The programme of personal and social education is being suitably developed to include important aspects of pupils' social and emotional learning. This will cover issues such as personal safety, giving pupils skills for dealing with others. There are policies for sex education and substance abuse but planned provision in these areas needs to be reviewed and increased.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The sharply focused leadership and skilful management of the two interim headteachers have secured the school's rapid improvement and have ensured that the improvements are sustainable. Their clear guidance and high expectations have raised morale and confidence of the staff, pupils and parents. The results of parental and pupil questionnaires confirm the view that the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Effective systems for checking and evaluating the work of the school have been embedded. The school has sensibly extended this programme to include peer observations so that all staff have a better understanding of the impact of new initiatives and areas for further development. Development planning is properly underpinned by accurate self-evaluation, revised policies and subject action plans. The school takes care to consult parents and responds to their views.

Responsibilities have been suitably delegated to staff and their leadership roles have been suitably developed through peer coaching. Curriculum leadership in mathematics is good. The management of other curriculum areas is developing well but subject leadership needs extending in order to guide curriculum improvement and to analyse and evaluate the impact of developments. Although the school is led by an interim headteacher, the excellent work of the assistant headteacher, combined with the willingness of other staff, demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Governance has strengthened since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The governing body receives concise and informative reports about the school and its progress. Governors are closely involved in the school and have developed sound procedures for checking its work so that they are able to hold the school to account.

The local authority has provided the school with well judged and effective support to help it improve. The appointment of the two interim headteachers has been fundamental to the school's transformation.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	4	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	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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?	2	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?	2	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	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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

When the inspectors visited your school last year they decided that it was not good enough and needed to improve. It has been my job to visit the school each term to check on how well you have been doing. I have now visited your school on three occasions. You have always been very helpful and friendly and this has made Woodcote a lovely place to visit. Thank you for being so welcoming to myself and Mr Martin on this inspection. We enjoyed talking to you about your work.

I agree with you and your teachers that the school has improved a lot in just one year. I have written a report that says that the school no longer requires special measures. There are lots of good things about your school:

- It is a very caring place to work and play.
- Your teachers and other staff look after you very well.
- We were very impressed with the way that many of you take responsibilities for your school and for looking after your friends. The school council is a good example of the way that you can improve the school.
- Your teachers work hard to make your learning interesting, and lots of your lessons are good.

However, there is always room for improvement. In particular I have asked your teachers to:

- work hard to keep improving the school's results, particularly when weaknesses in your writing let you down!

I wish you all the best for the future.