



Woodthorpe Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103334
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286632
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Greenwood Close
School category	Community		Kings Heath
Age range of pupils	4–11		Birmingham B14 6ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4645203
Number on roll (school)	207	Fax number	0121 4644027
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Lesley Ryan
		Headteacher	Helen Brigham
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006	Inspection number 286632
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodthorpe is a popular school that is a little smaller than average. Just over 30% of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but only a very small number are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The headteacher took up her position in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides well for its pupils. It is well on track to become outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this contributes very significantly to their progress. As one pupil commented, 'Teachers make learning fun; it's absolutely cool.' Children's enjoyment for learning begins in the Reception class where they receive a good start to their education. Good achievement is maintained throughout the school and this ensures pupils attain standards that are significantly above average by the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. Standards in science are very high. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support and guidance they receive.

The leadership of the school is good with a clear focus on improving standards further. New initiatives introduced by the recently appointed headteacher are enabling the school to build successfully on its previous good practice. For example, procedures for tracking how well pupils are doing have been refined and are now used effectively by the leadership to determine where extra support or guidance for pupils is needed. This is leading to better achievement by younger boys in reading. There is a strong family atmosphere at the school and good teaching seen throughout the school is the result of staff supporting and helping one another to develop their classroom practice. Teachers mark work regularly but guidance on how to improve their work could be clearer. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their own work.

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They gain a good understanding of how to follow a healthy and safe lifestyle and they try to put their knowledge into practice by participating in the wide range of sporting activities offered by the school. The pupils contribute significantly to the community through their participation in charitable and neighbourhood events. The pupils' outstanding enjoyment of lessons is partly the result of the very good pastoral care provided by staff. The use of learning targets to help guide pupils' learning is a relatively recent initiative and is not yet practised consistently in all classes to have much impact on the pupils' progress. The curriculum is good, providing the pupils with many opportunities to improve their musical, physical and artistic skills. However, the school is missing opportunities to raise the pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of cultures represented in the school and the community.

Although there have been recent changes to the leadership of the school, well established procedures have ensured that this has not disrupted the smooth running of the school. Staff and governors rightly see it as the platform from which further developments will emanate. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection and there is a clear capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make pupils more aware of what they need to aim for to improve their work and improve the opportunities for them to be involved in assessing what they do.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to explore and understand the wide range of cultures within their school and community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In all classes, pupils of all abilities achieve well. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. On entry to the Reception class, children's skills are broadly average. By the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is above that found in many schools. Good achievement continues throughout the school and the pupils' literacy and numeracy skill levels are well above average. In the national tests in 2005, although standards were significantly above the national average, a small number of pupils did not achieve as well as expected in reading at the end of Year 2 and in English at the end of Year 6. However, 2006 results indicate achievement has improved and standards are again well above those seen in most schools. The quality of pupils' handwriting is the only aspect that lets them down a little because work is not presented as well as it might be. In science, standards are very high and in the national tests in 2006 almost every pupil attained the higher Level 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Children enjoy a wide range of cultural experiences, including learning to play musical instruments. However, their cultural development is only satisfactory because, although other faiths are covered in religious education, and associated festivals celebrated in assemblies, there is limited opportunity to ensure pupils are made aware that they live in a diverse cultural society. Behaviour is consistently good. Year 6 pupils are good role models for behaviour and enjoy their responsibilities in looking after younger children. Pupils take seriously their involvement in the school council, for example planning additional equipment for the playground and raising the necessary money. Pupils support a wide range of charities.

The pupils respect each other and work harmoniously together. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their enthusiasm for lessons is evident in the effort and concentration they put into their work.

Pupils are well aware of the need for healthy eating and the importance of taking sufficient exercise. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are very good and pupils have many opportunities to work as a team. This prepares them well for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers use a very good range of strategies, such as interactive whiteboards, to capture the pupils' attention. As a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy learning, are very well motivated and make good progress in all aspects of their learning. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because they are given effective support. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning begins in the Reception class. Here the staff plan a good balance of activities that pupils choose for themselves as well as teacher directed activities, and this develops children's confidence well. Throughout the school, teachers have very high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils are capable of achieving. Pupils rise to the challenge and try even harder. Pupils are encouraged to discuss work with partners, enabling them to improve their understanding. However, teachers do not involve the pupils sufficiently in assessing their own work or that of their peers. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and systematically but there is a lack of consistency in identifying how the pupils might improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class are provided with a wide range of interesting activities in all areas of learning. Good use is being made of a very attractively designed secure outdoor area as an extension of the classroom. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are provided with a rich, varied curriculum. Whilst prominence is given to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, a good emphasis on subjects such as art and music expands pupils' experiences well. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to promote learning in other subjects but the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for the same purpose is not quite so well developed. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. The curriculum is very well enriched through a variety of visits and visitors. One notable opportunity is for pupils in Year 3 to learn a brass instrument and to become band members. A good variety of extra-curricular activities are enthusiastically attended by pupils. These include a good number of sports and music clubs. There are good links with local theatre groups and primary and secondary schools, all of which enhance learning opportunities for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Pastoral care is very good and the 'family' atmosphere is one of the reasons for the school's popularity amongst parents. Staff know the pupils well and are committed to their well-being, providing

a secure, attractive and welcoming environment where the pupils feel safe, and confident that they can approach an adult if they have a problem. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are rigorous.

Good support is provided by teachers and teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language, ensuring they make the progress of which they are capable. Effective assessment systems are in place to help teachers plan their work. However, target setting has only recently been introduced in English and although the pupils have targets, they are not always clear about what they mean. Targets have yet to be introduced in other subjects. The marking system is very complex and does not always give constructive comments on how pupils might reach the targets they have been set in English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The school's self-evaluation of what it does well and what could be improved is accurate. However, in striving for greater improvement, it judges itself too severely. The school has well established procedures that are being improved upon. For example, the tracking procedures that were in place identified how well pupils were doing but have been improved to enable the staff to react more quickly to any underachievement. New strategies are readily embraced, for example a different approach to teaching letter sounds is already having an impact on pupils' early reading skills. Subject coordinators lead their subjects well and issues identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully. However, the management structure of the school limits opportunities for senior staff to monitor the quality of teaching and learning on a systematic and rigorous basis. It is rightly looking at how this might be developed. The views of parents and pupils are ascertained through questionnaires and taken into account when planning future priorities. Through good governance and financial management, resources are used to best effect and ensure the school provides good value for money.

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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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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?	2

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 very much for talking to us and helping us with our work when we visited your school recently. Those in charge of the school are making sure it provides you with a good education. These are some of the things that are going well:

- In every class you make good progress with your English and mathematics work. You do particularly well in science.
- You are very enthusiastic and thoroughly enjoy your work. You behave well and are polite and respectful.
- You understand the importance of eating healthily, taking exercise and staying safe.
- The teaching is good and helps you to do your best. Those of you who need extra help with your work are given good support.
- The school provides you with a good range of visits, visitors, trips and activities, all of which you enjoy.

Whilst there are no major weaknesses, your handwriting is not as neat as it could be and, to make your school even better, I have asked the school to:

- Ensure that you are all aware of your learning targets and give you more opportunities to be involved in seeing how well you are doing.
- Give you more opportunities to learn about the different cultures in your school and community.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and keep up the good work as you obviously do at the moment. Once again, thank you for helping us with our work.