



# Woodston Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110692  
**Local Authority** CITY OF PETERBOROUGH  
**Inspection number** 288743  
**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Brennan

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Celta Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Woodston, Peterborough
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Cambridgeshire PE2 9ER
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 562784
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	108	<b>Fax number</b>	01733 566622
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Webb
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	20–21 November 2006	288743

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves families in and around the Fletton area of Peterborough. This is an area of marked deprivation that is reflected in the school's intake. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is almost twice the national average, as is the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils who have experienced difficulties at other schools are admitted. A small number of pupils are in public care. Pupils' skills and abilities on entry to school are below average but are lower than this in language and literacy. Most pupils are from a White British background. A small but growing number of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic groups, some of whom are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The school has achieved a Healthy School Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school lives up to its motto, 'Small School, High Expectations.' Good leadership, typified by the headteacher, has set high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development. By and large the school achieves these. It is a good school, giving good value for money.

Pupils achieve well to reach average standards by the time they leave the school. The good quality of education in the Foundation Stage ensures that children's schooling gets off to a good start. Good momentum is maintained through the rest of the school but pupils do better in reading, mathematics and science than in writing. Although the school gives pupils a good, vibrant curriculum it is not fully exploited to help pupils write with flair and imagination. The school warmly welcomes pupils experiencing personal or learning difficulties and provides well for them. Much of this is down to the strong partnerships teachers establish with other staff. Pupils who have learning difficulties benefit from a concentration on basic skills, those with complex emotional needs are given sensitive encouragement, and those who are at the early stages of learning English are quickly assessed and given prompt support. As a result these groups of pupils progress well and develop positive attitudes towards themselves and school.

Productive partnership with teaching assistants is one feature of the good quality of teaching and learning in the school. Pupils are managed with sensitivity and lessons planned with a clear sense of purpose. However, although activities are stimulating, teachers do not consistently engage all pupils in question and answer sessions and do not consistently apply strategies that help pupils explore and deepen their thoughts through speaking and listening. Consequently some pupils are inattentive when the teacher is talking and younger pupils find it difficult to talk about learning with a partner. In other respects pupils' personal development is good. Pupils strive hard to gain the wide range of rewards on offer, they behave well and very much enjoy school. This is helped by the wide range of clubs and trips. Pupils are energetic and social at playtimes. They show a strong commitment to eating healthily and are willing to take responsibility for their work, their behaviour and their school.

The school has made measurable improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to do so. Key weaknesses have been tackled with vigour. Governors and key staff have been helped successfully to develop necessary leadership skills. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses. This gives clear direction to the school improvement plan. However, the plan itself is not explicit enough about the monitoring of teaching and learning. It does not home in on key priorities and is too general in nature.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the way teachers question pupils to promote speaking and listening skills.
- Fully utilise opportunities presented in the wider curriculum to develop imaginative writing skills.

- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning has a greater sense of purpose and outcomes are used to improve practice.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in Reception make good progress in learning to read, write and count. Although many reach expected goals for their age by the time they start Year 1, a significant number have still to do so, especially in aspects of language. The school is meeting with increasing success the challenging targets it sets for itself. In Year 2 and in Year 6, results in national tests have risen well over the past few years. Provisional results for 2006 in both Years 2 and 6 are the highest for some time. Although standards are average, pupils are progressing well in reading, mathematics and in science. Standards are not as high in writing as in other subjects. This is in part because of pupils' lower starting point but also because the school has not fully harnessed the curriculum to promote imaginative writing. Pupils who have learning or emotional difficulties receive prompt and sensitive help and as a result achieve well. The school has responded quickly to a recent increase in the number of pupils joining the school speaking little English. These pupils are given good support and also achieve well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' have a good understanding of how to live healthily and successfully put principles into practice. Many bring healthy packed lunches, or choose healthy hot meals at lunchtime. A high proportion take part in the varying sporting activities on offer. Playtimes are active and social occasions, not least because of innovative use of clubs such as the friendship club, which help pupils to learn skills in playing together amicably. Although pupils report some 'falling outs' more serious incidents are rare. When they do occur, they are resolved quickly by the school. The counselling of individual pupils with the most acute personal difficulties works well. As one boy put it, the counselling helped him 'get rid of stress.' Such sensitive support helps these pupils and enables them to make the most of school life. Pupils clearly enjoy school. Attendance rates are above average. Most pupils join in lessons well but a significant number can lose interest during question and answer sessions. Younger pupils in particular find it difficult to share thoughts with a partner. Pupils willingly take responsibility for their school through the school council and other jobs, such as play leaders. All of this is indicative of their good moral, social, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils acquire good social and academic skills which provide a firm base for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Strengths lie in the encouraging relationships that pervade learning. Classrooms are calm and purposeful places. Skilled teaching assistants, working in close partnership with class teachers, ensure that pupils' differing needs are met. Revamped assessment procedures ensure that lessons have a clear sense of purpose. Marking in key subjects such as literacy makes reference to key targets. However, marking in other subjects such as religious education takes too little account of the targets which weakens their impact. Tasks are, for the most part, engaging and work well such as when pupils develop their ideas in writing over a series of lessons. There are occasions when teachers use 'talking partners' and drama to develop speaking and listening skills and deepen pupils' thinking. However, this practice is inconsistent. There are occasions when questioning at the beginning of lessons does not involve enough pupils. Some questions are probing but in the main pupils are not encouraged to explain their thinking in depth or to answer in well constructed and considered sentences.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A thorough programme for pupils' personal development boosts their confidence and self-esteem, especially those pupils who have the most acute emotional needs. Key skills are woven skilfully into indoor and outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage. This practical approach to learning has been extended to Years 1 and 2 through, for example, the use of role play areas. Efforts to make learning enjoyable centre around the extensive use of trips and visitors to school to bring learning to life and the linking of several subjects into overarching themes. These provide well for the development of computer skills and for the increased use of drama. This can lead to imaginative writing, such as in Year 6 when, after 'living' through the blitz, pupils wrote plays to express their feelings. However, not all themes and trips lead to such good creative writing and some subjects are not yet thought of as a vehicle for promoting writing. Much of what pupils write, in religious education for example, is narrowly focussed on factual writing.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good understanding of staff of each individual pupil and their encouraging attitude underpins the good care the school takes of pupils. Thorough assessment procedures see to it that those pupils who have learning, emotional or language needs are quickly identified and that tailored support programmes are put in place. Partnerships with outside agencies are strong. Be it games workshops, emotional counselling by the influential learning mentor, or 'buddy' support for reading, the school provides well for pupils' differing needs. Assessment information generates key learning targets,

which are becoming increasingly well known by pupils themselves. The school has robust arrangements in place for pupils' safety including those for child protection.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good, energetic and optimistic leadership, typified by the headteacher, has helped create a school where the encouraging ethos provides well for pupils' personal and academic development. Staff morale is high and a strong sense of team pervades the school. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school. Weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been tackled well. The school has worked in close partnership with the local authority to equip key staff with essential leadership skills. These have been used to good effect to help create and use efficient assessment procedures. Key weaknesses in performance have been clearly identified and give direction to the school improvement plan. This in turn leads to well directed and widespread staff training, including training for teaching assistants. However, the plan does not clearly spell out how the school will monitor and evaluate the extent to which actions, or associated training has been successful. Whilst there have been some visits to lessons to check up on the quality of teaching and learning, these have been rather informal and general in nature. This in turn leads to some inconsistencies in teaching, for example, in the use of questions to promote pupils' skills in communicating thoughts and ideas. Governors support and challenge the school and visit regularly. However, their monitoring role is limited by the lack of detail in the school improvement plan. Nevertheless, governance is good overall.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

22 November 2006

Dear Children

Woodston Primary School, Celta Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 9ER

Thank you very much for being so friendly to me when I visited your school recently. It was like visiting one big family. I really enjoyed my time with you and would like to share with you what I thought about your school.

You go to a good school. It seems a very happy place. You all get on well with each other and with the adults in school. Playtimes look to be fun and energetic times. I was very impressed with how many of you were eating healthy foods and by the way older children looked after younger ones and helped them play games. I could see that if you needed extra help with your work or with your behaviour that you were given it and that this help was working. You behave well in lessons and I could see many of you trying hard to meet your targets. Not all of you were joining in when the teacher was asking the class questions. I have asked the school to think about ways to get more of you talking about your learning in lessons. You can help by continuing to work hard and being ready to talk to your teacher and your classmates about what is going on in lessons.

You told me that you really enjoyed school. There are lot of clubs for you to join and trips out to make learning fun. There were lots of interesting things happening in your classrooms. I have asked the teachers and the headteacher to spend time in each other's classrooms more often to see what is going on. You told me how much you like work that puts subjects together into one lesson, such as in your topic work. I was impressed by the work you have done on computers in your topics. I could also see that there were times when you were helped to write using your imagination when you are working in subjects like history. I think you could do this more often and have asked the school to look for as many ways as possible to help you improve your writing.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Brennan

Lead Inspector