

Woodlands Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113336
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289585
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Grafton
Headteacher	Barbara Harrington
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2002
School address	Abbot Road Ivybridge PL21 9TF
Telephone number	01752 690046
Fax number	01752 698342

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	9 July 2007
Inspection number	289585

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Pupils are taught in three parallel mixed year group classes in Reception and Year 1 and also in Years 3 and 4. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average for schools of this size, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is greater than average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected nationally for their age. The school is part of a small national government sponsored pilot working towards becoming a specialist school for music and the arts. The school has a number of nationally recognised awards including Investors in People, Active Mark and Healthy Schools status.

The headteacher resigned at short notice following a period of ill health during the autumn term of 2006. One of the two assistant headteachers was appointed acting headteacher for the remainder of the school year. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed to take up post in September.

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 that serves its community well. Recent unscheduled changes to the leadership team have been managed well enabling the school to maintain and build on previous successes. The acting headteacher has skilfully led the school at a time of transition and there is a strong sense of team spirit involving pupils, staff, governors, parents and the wider community. The school has a clear and accurate understanding of almost all aspects of its performance, including those areas in need of improvement, based on effective systems for checking its work. It has made good progress in addressing previous weaknesses and is well placed to continue to improve.

Pupils achieve well. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. One exception to this is standards in writing which are lower than other aspects, especially for boys, and close to the national average, with weaknesses in the quality of lengthy pieces of writing. The school is introducing new approaches to teaching writing but these have not been established long enough to have had a clear impact. Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress as a result of the satisfactory provision in classes they share with Year 1 pupils. They have limited opportunities to learn through independent play and free choice.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The pupils' particularly good social and moral development is supported strongly by the good teaching and learning. Teachers plan and provide a good curriculum with a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. They effectively encourage pupils to work collaboratively, think about the impact of their actions and reflect on what they are learning. Consequently, pupils are very caring towards one another and sensitive about resolving the very occasional disputes. Pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary, for example, when moving to assembly. Pupils show outstanding levels of responsibility in helping to run the school, including managing the school council's budget, and taking part in a very extensive range of activities in the wider community. Although global links are helping them to gain an understanding of cultures across the world, they have a limited understanding and awareness of Britain's cultural diversity beyond rural Devon. Throughout the school, the care, guidance and support received by all pupils are good.

The school is led and managed well. The acting headteacher and restructured leadership team, together with other staff and governors, have a good understanding of their roles and effectively promote a balanced approach between pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. They have recently developed effective systems to track the progress of pupils and are using this newfound information well to identify those pupils in need of additional support. Leadership of the Reception Year lacks the clarity found elsewhere in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in extended writing, especially by boys, so that standards more closely match those attained in other subjects.
- Strengthen the provision and leadership within Reception in order to improve children's learning experiences and the progress they make.
- Help pupils gain a greater awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of pupils of all abilities is good, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children in Reception make a satisfactory start. By the end of the year, most are reaching the expected learning goals for their age. Some are exceeding them, particularly in personal and social development. Pupils make good progress by the end of Year 2 and standards attained in national assessments have risen and are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. This good progress is maintained by older pupils. Standards are above the national average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and above national expectations in the creative arts. Standards in writing are lower, being average, because the progress made by boys, especially in producing longer pieces of writing, is not as strong as that made by girls or that made by boys in other subjects. The school has begun to carefully track pupils' progress in writing and is using the information well to address weaknesses in pupils' ability in and commitment to producing longer pieces of writing. However, it is too soon to see any significant impact of changes being introduced on overall standards. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and almost all have attained these at the end of this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with particular strengths in social and moral development. Pupils demonstrate very mature approaches to school which they greatly enjoy and talk about enthusiastically. Parents appreciate this. One rightly commented, 'They love going to school every day and are very proud of "their" school.' The pupils' exceptionally good collaborative skills contribute to the good range of qualities needed for their future education and the world of work. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Whilst they appreciate the links with South Africa and India, they have a limited knowledge and understanding of city life and the diversity of cultures and values in societies across modern Britain. Pupils show an outstanding commitment to their involvement in community events such as the 'Ivybridge gate dressing' ceremony, and running local and national charity events. School councillors reflect with pride on their significant involvement in the appointment process for the new headteacher. Pupils' attendance is good and almost all arrive punctually. Pupils have a good understanding of how a healthy diet and exercise help to keep them fit and many keenly participate in physical activities during and after school. They are very conscious of how to keep themselves safe, and older ones instinctively take care of younger ones around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan effectively together in teams to provide similar learning experiences in parallel classes. They encourage pupils to work collaboratively in small groups or with partners where they have to talk through their understanding and ideas. This successfully promotes learning and motivates pupils who show an exceptionally positive approach and attitude to their lessons. Another strong aspect of teaching is the way pupils are helped to think about ways of learning

and their own questioning skills, for example, when brainstorming ideas about coastal erosion in geography. Pupils are frequently reminded about the purposes of their learning, are helped to assess their own progress and given clear targets and ideas for improving further. Work is usually well matched to pupils' different abilities. In the classes with more than one year group, teachers find this more difficult and occasionally not all pupils are sufficiently challenged as the teacher focuses on one particular level. This slows the learning of other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well balanced and effectively adapted to meet the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, in the Reception Year, it is unduly influenced by the needs of the Year 1 pupils. This means there are relatively few opportunities for younger children to learn independently through play indoors and out. Until recently, the school provided relatively few timetabled opportunities for pupils to produce sustained pieces of writing, which resulted in writing, especially that done by boys, lagging behind achievement in other subjects. The provision has improved but it is too early for this to show through in improved standards. There is an effective focus on making links between subjects, for example, through the very successful South Africa week linking many subjects, including personal and social development, geography and art. Imaginative ideas are used to promote pupils' personal and social development, for example, when they had to experience the impact of discrimination. The excellent music and drama studio, a very inviting reading room, and an African garden for quiet reflection contribute well to the quality of the curriculum. There are many high quality extra activities beyond the classroom, such as performing in local festivals, an annual residential visit and many clubs after school. These all contribute strongly to pupils' enthusiasm for school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are well cared for. Those with particular problems or who have times of significant crisis are supported exceptionally well and this is recognised by parents. One commented, 'The whole staff team have been fantastic.' Another said, 'They have done everything in their power to accommodate her needs...more importantly, she feels accepted.' There are rigorous procedures designed to safeguard pupils with ongoing training for all staff. Pupils receive good pastoral and academic guidance. Teachers find imaginative ways of involving pupils in setting short-term targets to improve their learning. Progress towards these targets is carefully checked. There is some inconsistency in the quality of focused support given to specific groups of pupils in the mixed-year group classes. The school recognises the need for further training of teachers and teaching assistants to address this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has motivated all partners within the school community, at a time of uncertainty and change, through her own energy and enthusiasm. She has demonstrated a commitment to shared responsibilities and decision making and promoted a coordinated approach to enhancing learning in all classes. Members of the extended and restructured leadership team have a clear understanding of their roles and priorities for development. There are good systems for checking the work of the school in a rigorous but constructive way and

information is carefully analysed and shared. The leadership of the Reception Year within classes of mixed year groups is less effective. This has resulted in relatively weaker provision and slower progress by these children than by older pupils in other classes. However, the school has identified the problem and is taking effective steps to deal with it. Improved systems for tracking pupils' progress in writing have enabled leaders to identify the precise areas of weakness and introduce new practices. However, this is still to work through into improved standards. All relevant groups are consulted about new proposals and this helps promote the sense of partnership and commitment to professional development. Governors are very committed to the school and fulfil their roles well. An example of this is the very effective way they recently prepared for the appointment of a new headteacher. They have good systems for finding out about the work of the school and are fully involved in key decision making.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	3
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	1
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.

Annex A

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

16 July 2007

Dear Children

Woodlands Park Primary School, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 9TF

I visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. I thoroughly enjoyed my day in your school talking with a number of you in lessons, looking at some of your work and meeting members of your school council. Thank you for making me so welcome. I am pleased to say yours is a good school. Here are some of the 'highlights' I found:

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- You behave well and are very thoughtful about one another, and what you can do to help each other. You told me that you really like school very much.
- Everyone who works in the school takes good care of you and makes sure you get extra help if and when you need it. Your parents are pleased about this and about lots of other things.
- Your teachers do a good job in helping you to learn well. They work well together to plan lots of interesting things for you to study in the classroom and also extra activities such as trips, special events and clubs.
- The leaders and governors work together to run the school well, and share new ideas to keep improving it.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on these things to make the school even better:

- Help you more when you are working on producing long pieces of writing so that you do even better by the time you reach Year 6.
- Improve the arrangements for children in Reception so they can spend more time doing the things they want to without having to fit in so much with the older children in their classes.
- Find ways to make sure you learn more about what is important in the lives of all the different groups of people who live in our country.

I know you will do all you can to help your teachers with this and that you will have other ideas about ways the school could be improved.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead Inspector