



Woodham Ley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114795
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290033
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Nichola Perry

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rushbottom Lane
School category	Community		Great Tarpots, Great Tarpots
Age range of pupils	4–11		Thundersley, Essex SS7 4DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 753652
Number on roll (school)	204	Fax number	01268 795251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Mills
		Headteacher	Mrs Ros Dunhill
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006	Inspection number 290033
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils in this average sized primary school are mainly from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils come from a range of home backgrounds. Overall attainment on entry to the school is similar to national expectations. The school has grant funded provision for pre-school pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although uneven across the school. Some pupils do not have well developed language, communication or social skills on entry but most make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 to reach broadly average standards. Whilst standards by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average over the last five years pupils' achievement slows to satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and some pupils are not always achieving as well as they could, especially in writing.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and some teaching is good. Planning is good, and activities are appropriately matched to the purpose of the lesson. Some teaching is lively and imaginative and makes good links with other subjects so that pupils are motivated to learn, behaving and achieving well. However, expectations of what pupils can do are sometimes too low and occasionally too much time is spent reinforcing learning for less able pupils, wasting time for higher attaining pupils. Teachers have satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' progress but targets set for pupils in parts of Key Stage 2 are not always sufficiently challenging, leading to slower progress than elsewhere in the school. The curriculum is satisfactory, with some good developments linking subjects together, making learning more meaningful.

The school works effectively with other providers to promote pupils' well-being. It has worked hard to ensure that attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is satisfactory, except in a few lessons when too much time is spent reminding pupils to pay attention. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with strengths in opportunities for developing good social and cultural awareness. The care of pupils is good. However, pupils are not given sufficient academic guidance through the setting of accurate, challenging targets.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has established a sound atmosphere in the school. The school has a stable and committed staff who work well together. Satisfactory support is provided for recently appointed subject leaders by the deputy headteacher and they have access to appropriate professional development to improve their skills. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are ably led, supportive and hold the school to account with the information they have. However, the school does not have rigorous enough systems for checking how well it is doing so it has an inaccurate understanding of its own effectiveness. The school improvement plan does not reflect all that the school is doing and is not sufficiently robust in focusing on strategic planning for improvement.

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in one respect is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit. Improvements in mathematics and science suggest that the leadership of the school, in partnership with the governing body, demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. The positive attitudes of the pupils and strong local authority support are further encouraging signs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in Years 3 to 5, particularly in writing, by developing a better understanding and use of data to raise the expectations of both pupils and teachers of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- Monitor standards and provision rigorously, so that governors and the leadership of the school are able to fully evaluate its performance and tackle all weaknesses rapidly, through effective development planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most reach the standards expected by the end of Reception. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved over the last three years and were above average in 2005. Standards in writing were well above average. Results in the 2006 tests show a significant drop in all subjects, reflecting differences in the cohort. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress and standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average in all subjects, although the proportion achieving the higher levels is significantly below average in English and below average in science. Standards in mathematics have risen towards above average due to effective improvement strategies. The 2006 Year 6 test results show that an average proportion of pupils reach the expected level but too few reach the higher level. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because their needs are identified clearly and they are supported well in their learning. There has been an improvement in standards in science, which was a cause for concern at the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Elements of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. An effective range of experiences contributes to pupils' good cultural development. For instance, work on Aboriginal art was combined with learning about Australia, involving geography, history and literacy. Pupils' attitudes to work are satisfactory, although there is a small minority who find it difficult to sustain concentration, especially if the work does not interest or challenge them. The attendance rate is close to average. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory in classrooms and in the playground. Pupils feel safe and understand the importance of having healthy lifestyles. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils' good social development, collaborative skills and involvement in fund-raising activities help to ensure their future economic well-being. Most enjoy school and value the friendships they form there. The school council gives them a voice in the running of the school and they speak with pride of the contributions that they have made.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the good lessons, teachers have good control of the class and high expectations. They challenge pupils, especially the more able, to give of their best, and they sustain a good pace so that the pupils are working hard and achieving well in the lesson. The pupils make choices and are involved in their learning. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers plan a good range of activities and use resources, such as interactive white boards, well to make learning more exciting. They are clear about what pupils are to learn, and share these aims with the pupils so that they know what the outcomes are expected to be. However, not all pupils are challenged sufficiently so some become bored. Some teaching time is wasted by many reminders to pupils to behave well. While most pupils make satisfactory progress the pace of learning is slower than in the better lessons and less is achieved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a secure emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, along with good provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The school is developing an innovative curriculum with an integrated approach to the teaching of history, geography and the creative arts. This is beginning to give more coherence to the curriculum for these subjects, providing some enjoyable and motivating experiences for pupils. Local people provide valuable inputs into art and history topics, bringing the subjects to life for the pupils. There is good emphasis on the cultures of other countries, including African dance and Aboriginal art. The curriculum is extended by a good programme of educational visits that give the pupils first-hand experience of the topics covered, including visits to a local farm and a sea life centre. A satisfactory range of clubs enables pupils to extend their sporting interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. There are some strengths, especially in the pastoral care aspects of the work of the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Risk assessments are completed when necessary ensuring children learn in a safe environment. Child protection procedures are in place and staff know how to raise any concerns they may have. Strengths include the effective school council and the peer mediation scheme, which enables older pupils to show initiative and exercise responsibility. Mediators wear their special coloured bands with pride. Most parents are pleased with the care and guidance given to their children. There are satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics, and to identify the next steps in their learning but this information is not always used effectively enough to set challenging work for pupils in Years 3 to 5.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and staff work hard to provide a happy and safe environment for pupils. Under good leadership by the chair, governors are supportive and challenging of the school's management, based on the information available to them. However, due to weaknesses in the school's understanding of the data on pupils' progress they have been working on inaccurate information. As a result, underachievement of some pupils at Key Stage 2 has not been tackled adequately. The improvement plan shows that the development of the whole child is the focus of the school's work. However, although all key staff prepare action plans for developing their subject, monitoring arrangements lack the rigour which would enable the school to accurately evaluate its performance.

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.

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?	3
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	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

18 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Woodham Ley Primary School, Rushbottom Lane, Great Tarpots, South Benfleet, Essex. SS7 4DN

We enjoyed our recent visit to your school. We were grateful for all the help you gave us when we were talking to you, when we were in your lessons and when we met you around the school, especially when we got lost.

You are clearly proud of your school and like your friends and teachers, although not many of you mentioned that you like learning. Most of you come to school every day and behave well around school and in lessons. However, a few of you get a bit fidgety when lessons are a bit slow and you aren't being challenged enough.

We think your teachers know you very well and take good care of you so you have someone to go to if you get worried. Children in Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 make good progress with their learning. However, we think some of you older ones could be learning more and doing better, especially in writing and in Years 3, 4, and 5. We have asked your school to get better at finding out what you are good at and what you find hard, and setting you work that you find challenging but manageable, especially in English, mathematics and science. We have also asked the school to write some very clear plans to help make sure that it improves quickly.

We are sure that your headteacher will work very hard to make sure that you can do much better.

Good luck for the future.

Nichola Perry

Lead Inspector