

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115704
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	290305
Inspection date	6 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Butler
Headteacher	Paula Needham
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002
School address	Church Road North Woodchester Stroud GL5 5PD
Telephone number	01453 872476
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school which has mixed-age group classes. This includes a class that caters for a small number of Reception children and Year 1 pupils. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The numbers starting school are small, so attainment on entry varies from year to year, but it is broadly as expected for most children. The leadership team have both been in place for a little under two years.

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 is improving rapidly and, as one parent enthusiastically reported, 'has exciting times ahead'. This is because it is being led and managed well. The relatively new headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed an extremely good senior leadership team. They have an insightful understanding of the needs of the school and are fully focused on improvement. As one parent explained, since the headteacher has arrived she has 'worked tirelessly to improve and update the school in all areas'. The senior team works in close partnership with the rest of the staff and the governing body. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing development. Despite an unsettled period after the last inspection, good progress has been made since then and the school has a good capacity to improve even more. Overall achievement is good, and by the time that the pupils are ready to move onto secondary school, standards are above average. This is particularly as a result of good quality provision in Years 1 to 6, which ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Teaching and learning are good. Interesting lessons are planned and the resources that are provided motivate the pupils in their learning. The good curriculum links subjects well and this helps make learning more meaningful for the pupils. Care, guidance and support are good and pupils' individual targets support them well in their work. However, the marking of books in mathematics and science does not always provide the pupils with information on how they can improve their work. The quality of provision and standards in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The children achieve satisfactorily and attain expected levels by the time they start Year 1. The school is adapting the planning and academic support for these children in the mixed-age class to ensure that it fully meets the particular needs of this small group of young children. Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Parents consider that the reason why the vast majority of their children are happy in school is because it has a 'lovely welcoming atmosphere'. Behaviour is good overall. However, the organisation of the outdoor playing area does not consistently encourage safe play. The school is looking to rectify this by altering the area available for football games. However, despite this problem, pupils do feel safe in school and confidently inform teaching staff when they have a problem. The school council is used successfully to hear the views and concerns of the pupils. Pupils know that they need a balanced diet and this is reflected in the good health of the pupils. They are also fully aware of how their high level of involvement in sporting events, weekly swimming and regular physical education lessons keeps them fit. The outstanding range of enrichment activities prepares pupils well for many aspects of their future life. For example, they are given a great many opportunities to develop their sporting, musical, drama and modern foreign language skills. This not only provides them with extremely valuable new knowledge, but also builds their self-esteem. The school is proud of its strong community links and sees itself as an important part of village life. Its good partnership with the local university provides additional support within the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure planned activities in Reception more closely meet the needs of these children so that they make the same progress as other pupils in the school.
- Ensure that teachers' marking in mathematics and science helps the pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Review playtime arrangements to ensure that all pupils consistently adopt safe practices.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Current standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 6. This represents good improvement in mathematics and science, where the school has focused successfully on problem-solving skills and improving the performance of girls. Children in Reception achieve satisfactorily and attain the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Although in the last two years standards at Year 2 have been above average, standards in the current Year 2 are below average. Nevertheless, these lower standards represent good progress, given that this year's group has an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities – representing almost half the group. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as the other pupils because they receive close attention in small groups and whole-class sessions.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception children show enthusiasm for their learning and happily work and play alongside the older pupils in their class. Pupils know that their school meals are nutritious and healthy. They are very proud of their healthy schools award and fully understand why 'chips are on the menu only once a week'! Their extensive involvement in sport keeps them fit. Most pupils like coming to school and behave well in class because 'teachers make lessons exciting so that our brains don't switch off'. However, occasionally a very small group of boys do not adopt safe practices in the playground when they play football. Pupils agree that this is at times a concern but they feel confident about telling a teacher when this happens. Attendance is above average and this is a good improvement, resulting from the effective systems that have been put in place to reduce the number of holidays taken in term time. Pupils contribute well within their own community and beyond, for example by organising cake sales for charity and school funds, and by collecting up litter in the local area. They acquire a good level of basic skills relevant to their future economic well-being. Pupils demonstrate good levels of enterprise and teamwork, for example when groups worked together to create an animated film show.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are well taught because lessons are well planned to meet their individual learning needs. Careful questioning ensures that all pupils are fully involved in the activities and resources are used well to maintain their interest. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants who help them in whole-class sessions and in individual activities. Good use is made of student teachers to reinforce learning. Whilst teachers use marking as a good way to help pupils improve their English work, this is not used consistently to support the teaching of mathematics and science. Teaching and learning in Reception are satisfactory. Good relationships are established between these young children and the teaching staff. However, the school is aware that their learning needs are not being fully met because their specific needs are not always planned for in sufficient detail in the mixed-age class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A particular strength of the curriculum lies in its outstanding range of enrichment activities, and particularly those for music and sport. Pupils' involvement in their prestigious musical performances and Shakespeare productions such as 'A Midsummer's Night Dream' and 'Twelfth Night' promotes self-esteem well. The good provision for personal, social, health and emotional development plays a valuable role in promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils benefit from the many links made between subjects because they give their learning relevance and interest. The curriculum is satisfactory in Reception. Children are provided with interesting activities, such as investigating pirates, but more use could sometimes be made of the outdoor area for extending their experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and staff are familiar with them. Personal development is monitored closely and, despite the playground difficulties with a very small group of pupils, there is confidence among pupils that teaching staff look after them well. The good systems for inducting the youngest children into school ensure that most settle quickly. Good personal support and guidance is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure these pupils receive the best possible help. Teaching staff support the pupils well in their academic work. Learning objectives are shared at the start of each lesson and the pupils use this to check that they have an understanding of what they are learning. Pupils have a clear knowledge of the targets they are working towards and feel that they are guided well in their learning. Pupils work is assessed and moderated well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The close working relationship between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is an exceptional feature of the school's leadership and management. As one parent commented, 'members of the senior leadership team are dynamic and forward thinking'. Their shared vision and purpose have successfully refreshed school life. The development of a secure monitoring system has enabled the senior leadership team to fully understand the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching. Their highly rigorous methods for tracking pupil progress, and the pinpointing of those pupils who need additional support, have resulted in a significant improvement in standards in the current Year 6. However, despite the introduction of many different strategies, the senior leaders know that, in the relatively short time they have been in post, they need to rethink the arrangements for football in the playground so that pupils always adopt safe practices. Subject leaders are developing a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement within the curriculum areas for which they have responsibility. This is because they are given opportunities to analyse test results and observe teaching and learning throughout the school. The systematic monitoring programme for governors ensures that they are knowledgeable about school life. This is successful in providing them with the evidence they need to challenge its performance.

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Annex A

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	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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.

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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 June 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Woodchester CE VA Primary School, North Woodchester, GL5 5PD Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I would like to say a special thanks to the group of pupils who spoke with me and who told me all about life at Woodchester. Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you well and you are confident about approaching your teachers with a problem. You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards that are above average. This is because teaching is good and staff provide a really wide and extremely interesting range of activities that make you want to learn. Your personal development is good too. You enjoy learning and behave well in class. However, you are occasionally unhappy when a very small group of boys do not play safely. You are justifiably proud of how healthy you are and it was nice to hear about all the activities you do. You particularly enjoy the sport, which you are very aware keeps you fit. I was interested to hear all about your Healthy Schools Award and how you were invited to a very nice hotel for the presentation of the certificate. Your fundraising events, such as the cake stalls, and your involvement in village life, for example the Medieval Fayre and Bonfire Party, prepare you well for the future. The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing it well. They are very determined to always give you the very best education. In order to make it even better the school has been asked to make sure that the activities always meet the needs of those of you in Reception. The school has also been asked to suggest ways in which you can improve your mathematics and science work when your books are marked. Finally, I have asked the school to make sure that the school rethinks the arrangements for football in the playground so that pupils always adopt safe practices. Once again thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that Woodchester becomes an even better school. Lorna Brackstone Lead inspector