



Redditch, Woodrow First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116730
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290615
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	First	School address	Longdon Close
School category	Community		Woodrow South
Age range of pupils	3–8		Redditch B98 7UZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 527619
Number on roll (school)	289	Fax number	01527 500497
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Phil Mould
		Headteacher	Sue Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area of considerable economic hardship. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Children enter the school with standards that are well below the expected levels. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than the start of the school year. The new headteacher has been in post since 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

Woodrow First is a good school. Standards of achievement are rising and pupils' personal development thrives in the school's friendly and purposeful environment. Pupils really enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. They are very polite and considerate to each other and to adults. Pupils feel very safe at school and are very safety conscious. They talk proudly about their charity work and the role of the school council that are developing their good sense of community. Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school and rightly think that the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Typically, they say 'I am more than pleased with my child's progress and have never had any concerns about their welfare.'

Good teaching and learning underpin this positive picture. Lessons are well ordered, interesting and challenging. As a result, pupils' achievement is good. However, teachers' plans do not consistently make good use of assessment data to identify and rectify specific problems in pupils' learning. Good provision ensures children make good progress and achieve well in the lively Nursery and Reception classes. Half of the children reach the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 4, especially in reading. While standards are below average overall by the end of Year 4, standards in reading are average. Writing is a weakness because pupils' handwriting is too slow and their spelling lacks accuracy.

The curriculum is good and makes an important contribution to pupils' enjoyment of learning and good achievement through its creative and imaginative approaches. The school makes excellent use of its pool and the regular swimming lessons support well pupils' efforts to take regular exercise as part of their good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils readily participate in the wealth of clubs that extend their interests and aspirations. Year 4 pupils are really looking forward to their residential weekend in Malvern!

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher is already having a significant impact on the school and is providing clear direction and purpose. The school has a largely accurate view of its effectiveness because it regularly monitors its performance and makes good use of evaluation to raise standards in most aspects of its work. However, the lack of full involvement of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating the performance of pupils means that the school's overview on what it needs to do to improve standards is restricted.

The effective steps taken to raise standards since the last inspection and the recent record of improvements show the school has a good capacity to make further gains.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' handwriting and spelling so as to improve writing standards.
- Ensure teachers consistently use assessment data effectively to inform their planning.
- Fully involve subject coordinators in monitoring and evaluating the pupils' progress so as to give a clear view on what needs to be done to raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage classes, children achieve well. They make especially good progress in speaking, understanding number and in their personal and social development. They quickly learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make, providing them with a firm foundation for reading. Children's progress in writing is slower.

In Years 1 to 4, standards are below average overall. Pupils' sound breadth of vocabulary gives them a clear understanding of the text they are reading. Their mental mathematics is a strength, but problem solving is a relative weakness because they find it difficult to interpret questions. Writing is the weakest subject. While pupils present work well and enjoy writing for different audiences, their slow handwriting and weak spelling makes writing longer pieces of work laborious.

The achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few children at the early stages of learning English, is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils respect and value each other and the world around them. Their outstanding behaviour comes from a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' appreciation of their place in a multicultural society is well developed.

Pupils report no bullying and are confident in approaching a member of the school's staff if they have a worry and say their concerns are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They understand the need for regular exercise and do their best to keep fit. Pupils are clear about the pitfalls of a poor diet but not all choose a healthy lunch box! While their use of computers is good, below average standards in writing and mathematics are hindering their preparation for future economic well-being. Robust and effective measures have led to a significant improvement in attendance since the last inspection with current figures showing it to be average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and confidently use a good variety of teaching styles to successfully engage, interest and challenge pupils. Very good class management leads to outstanding behaviour of pupils and good attitudes towards their work which contribute to pupils' good achievement. Pupils work well independently, a practice successfully established in the Nursery and Reception. Pupils'

learning is well supported by teaching assistants who have a clear understanding of the different needs of pupils in the class.

Teachers' planning is not sharply enough focused on rectifying areas of specific weakness in learning because they do not consistently analyse assessment data effectively and this slows the rate of pupils' progress in some aspects of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The exciting and varied curriculum meets statutory requirements. The Foundation Stage curriculum gets children off to a good start and lays a secure basis for future learning through a wide range of stimulating resources and activities.

In Years 1 to 4, there is rightly a strong focus on English and mathematics, which enables pupils to achieve well from below average starting points. Other subjects flourish, too, and pupils talk enthusiastically about art and design and design and technology lessons.

Arrangements for gifted and talented pupils are limited and the school recognises the need to identify more clearly how their needs are to be addressed more effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance. Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or medical problems. This enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. The school cares for vulnerable children well by making good use of external agencies and specialists to promote their welfare when the need arises. There is a successful record of supporting families shown by the very good progress made by children whose parents participate in 'family learning' courses organised by the school. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are robust.

Procedures to assess pupils' work and track their progress are good. Pupils are largely meeting the challenging targets set for them. However, older pupils are not always clear as to what their academic targets are and this limits the opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own learning. The school provides very effective additional support for individual pupils who under-perform, through booster classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher's drive to raise standards is shared by all staff and governors. In a very short period of time, she has improved the quality of lesson monitoring to focus on accelerating learning. She has also improved assessment procedures so that pupils' progress can be better followed and underachievement quickly spotted. Governance is satisfactory and is improving through much needed training to enable

governors to interpret data and challenge the school's view about its performance. The monitoring and evaluation of many aspects of performance, such as personal development, are good. This has led to policies that have successfully improved pupils' behaviour, attendance levels and reading standards. However, the school agrees that subject coordinators need to be more active in monitoring and evaluating and taking responsibility for raising standards of work in their subjects or the year groups that they lead.

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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	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

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	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

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	3
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	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. You clearly enjoy being in a school in which you all get on so well and help each other. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school. We have judged that the school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the 'highlights'

- You really enjoy your learning and work hard for your teachers.
- You are extremely well behaved.
- You have a very interesting range of lessons and clubs.
- All of the staff care for you very well.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception, and you all do well in reading.
- Your headteacher is leading the school well.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve your handwriting and written work.
- Make better use of your marks and test results to plan work that will help you achieve more.
- Ensure that those teachers with responsibilities for subjects check on the work that you do.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.