

Woodlands Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120436
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291734
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	John Foster

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev John Pavey
Headteacher	Mrs Elspeth McMenemie
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Whitethorn Grove Birchwood Lincoln LN6 0PF
Telephone number	01522 683557
Fax number	01522 687835

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area of significant deprivation to the west of Lincoln city centre. It is slightly smaller than the average infant and nursery school and almost all pupils are of White British descent. A few pupils do not speak English as their first language. When they start in the Nursery, most children's attainment is well below that expected for their age. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the percentage with learning difficulties. There is a higher percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need than in most schools. The school is used regularly by the community for such activities as a family learning programme, keep fit classes and the Birchwood Sure Start group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives excellent value for money, a judgement which closely matches the school's own view of its performance. Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and senior managers, linked to an excellent curriculum and exceptionally high levels of care, guidance and support, allow the pupils to achieve outstandingly well and make excellent progress. The school monitors its performance very effectively and uses the information gained to plan for its future development. The subject leaders are extremely good in managing their subjects and clearly understand what they need to do to improve further the already high standards. The governors fulfil their roles well and are effective in monitoring the school's performance. The parents fully support the school, with no negative responses recorded in the questionnaire. As one parent wrote, 'We couldn't ask for a better school and staff'.

Throughout the school pupils' achievement is outstanding. From low levels of attainment when starting school, they make excellent progress so that they attain above average levels in national assessments at the end of Year 2. The major reason for this is the outstanding teaching they receive. Teachers are fully committed to ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to develop, and their assessment of pupils' needs and meticulous planning to meet these needs ensure the excellent progress made. However, the setting of individual targets for pupils is in its infancy and has yet to impact fully on their learning. Over the past four years, standards have risen significantly to the point where, in 2006, national assessment results placed the school significantly above average. The writing results were particularly high in relation to national figures. The Foundation Stage provides an excellent start for the children by providing an exceptional range of activities to improve their learning and social skills.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. It is based on the development of skills and there are strong links between subjects. Visits form an important part of the curriculum and many visitors to the school help pupils to learn. In the Foundation Stage, the outdoor area is very good and used very well to support children's development. The themed weeks organised to extend learning opportunities provide very effective ways of using the time available for teaching. The school places great emphasis on pupils' personal development and the levels of care, guidance and support provided. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with their social and moral development being outstanding aspects. Whilst the school plans well for pupils' cultural development through art and music, their awareness of the wider cultural mix within the country is not as well developed. Arrangements for child protection, risk assessments and health and safety are excellent and are fully understood and implemented by all staff. Attendance is slightly below average. Whilst the school works very hard and has effective strategies to improve levels of attendance, too many parents fail to support the school's work in raising these levels. The school encourages pupils to live healthy lifestyles and pupils know really well what they need to do to keep safe and healthy. They are provided with fresh fruit and the Foundation Stage children are given milk. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary and this helps them in their learning. They are involved in the community well and the school council, though recently established, is beginning to have a positive effect on school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the newly established processes for setting targets for individual pupils, giving them greater involvement in deciding what their targets should be so that they know how to achieve them.
- Monitor the levels of attendance, and continue to act on information gained, to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From a low starting point, pupils are taught exceptionally well and enjoy an excellent curriculum, resulting in outstanding achievement, including by those with learning difficulties or disabilities. During the past four years pupils' attainment has risen dramatically from below average in 2002 to significantly above average in 2006, showing excellent progress. In the Foundation Stage children are given an exceptional start and make very good progress. However, by the time they start in Year 1, many still do not reach the expected learning goals in spite of the excellent teaching they receive, because of their low starting points. The outstanding teaching continues throughout Key Stage 1 and, as a result, many pupils attain above average levels. The current Year 2 group of pupils, however, are attaining broadly average levels. This group was identified by the school at an early stage as having an exceptionally low starting point. Their achievement, however, has been excellent and they have made excellent progress to reach their current level of attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school and their behaviour is exemplary. Attendance, though improving, remains a little below average. Pupils feel very safe and know that there is always someone to go to with worries or concerns. Pupils conscientiously carry out responsibilities such as 'playground buddies'. The recently established school council confidently discusses classmates' views and suggests improvements, such as developing playground equipment. Good links have been established with the local community through the local churches and when, for example, the school choir entertains the elderly. Pupils develop very caring attitudes such as when they raise funds for a number of charities. They have an excellent understanding of what is needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and take part in physical activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in their moral and social development. Pupils reflect well in lessons and are developing a good understanding of cultural traditions, although their awareness of the broad multi-cultural mix within Britain is not as secure. The excellent progress made in English and mathematics and the school's links with industry prepare pupils extremely well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is excellent, thus enabling pupils to achieve outstandingly well. Lessons are very well planned to maintain pupils' interest and

strong emphasis is placed on promoting their personal development. Positive relationships are evident between pupils and between adults and pupils. Well-established routines ensure that lessons move at a very good pace. Teachers' skills at encouraging discussion and using well-focused questions extend pupils' learning very well. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all are clear about pupils' learning and progress. They give very good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, allowing them to make excellent progress towards their individual learning targets.

Teachers' marking is thorough and clearly relates to pupils' achievement in reaching learning objectives. The information gleaned from very good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress is used well in planning lessons for pupils' differing abilities. However, it has only recently been used to set individual targets for the pupils and as a result this has not yet had a significant impact on their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is very well planned to ensure that pupils progressively develop essential skills within closely linked subjects. It is particularly enriched with a wide range of enjoyable visits and visitors. The special activity weeks, such as the 'expressive arts week', when all classes are focused on a range of related activities, provide further very good learning opportunities. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to develop children's social and early communication skills, allowing them to make very good progress. This strong emphasis on promoting personal and social development continues across the school so that pupils have a good understanding of how they can be good citizens. The use of the local community as a resource for learning is exceptional for pupils of this age, such as when, in the 'industry week', pupils learn a range of skills and look at how businesses work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent, caring environment. Parents appreciate that their children are well cared for and that the school ensures that their children feel safe and secure. Teachers and other staff know the children well so that children are confident that, should they have a problem, there is always an adult to whom they can turn for advice and help. Procedures for health and safety, risk assessments and child protection are secure. The school has developed excellent procedures to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress. These procedures are used well to identify, as early as possible, those pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in order to give them appropriate support so enabling them to make excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and has led the development of the school during the past four years exceptionally well. As a result, standards have risen significantly. The leadership team provides excellent support to the headteacher and together they give a very positive steer to the school's development. The school monitors and evaluates its performance very well and uses the information gained very effectively in setting challenging targets and planning its future. All subject leaders manage

their subjects exceptionally well and are fully aware of the strengths and what they need to do to improve their subjects further. Governance is good. Whilst governors make a good contribution in monitoring the school's performance, for example, through links with subject coordinators, they are over-reliant on the headteacher in planning the school's future. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues from the previous inspection and is extremely well placed to improve its provision further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

26 March 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Woodlands Infant and Nursery School, Whitethorn Grove, Lincoln, LN6 0PF

As you know, Miss Rogers and I came into school last week to see how you were getting on with your work. We would like to thank you for the welcome you gave us and for the ways in which you helped us to do our work. This letter is to let you know what we found out about your school.

You are very fortunate to go to such a good school. Mrs McMenemie, the staff and governors all care about you greatly and work very hard to give you an excellent education. They are successful in this. The work they plan for you enables you to make excellent progress and attain very high standards. You are taught very well and have an excellent curriculum with many visits and visitors to help you to learn. You told us that you always feel safe in school and that, if you have a problem, there is always an adult that you can talk to about it. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour, your attitudes to your work and the way you get on so well together. Although most of you enjoy coming to school and attend regularly, some of you would make even better progress in your work if you came to school more often.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked the staff and governors to:

- set you individual targets for your learning and show you what to do to make your work even better
- keep a check on which of you do not come to school regularly and encourage your parents to make sure that you do so.

With all best wishes,

Yours sincerely

John Foster

Lead Inspector