

South Wootton First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120903
Local Authority	NORFOLK
Inspection number	291903
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Geraldine Bolton
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Mahoney
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2003
School address	Church Lane South Wootton King's Lynn Norfolk PE30 3LJ
Telephone number	01553 671552
Fax number	01553 679474

Age group	4–8
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools

Description of the school

South Wootton First School is an average sized school serving the outskirts of King's Lynn in Norfolk. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with statements of special educational need is below average. A very small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South Wootton First is a good school. It is a happy school characterised by good relationships and having fun. The approach to learning, involving all aspects of a child's development, has led to pupils gaining high levels of self-confidence and self esteem through outstanding personal development. This strong focus on personal development and well being has led to the school being awarded the full Healthy Schools Status, which is evidence of outstanding provision. All those involved with the school ensure that pupils stay healthy, stay safe, contribute well to their community and prepare effectively for their economic well being. The school is not afraid of tackling difficult issues in order to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Over the last five years, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 have been well above average, with significantly high standards in reading and mathematics. Pupils' attainment when they start school is above average. They make good progress in Foundation Stage and throughout the school because of good teaching and the focus on personal development, to reach exceptionally high standards in reading and mathematics and high standards in writing by the time they leave. Pupils understand the importance of learning. Teachers plan practical, stimulating activities to engage their interest, although not all teachers actively involve pupils throughout the whole lesson or ask pupils to evaluate their learning. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and pay attention to the content of their work, but there is not a clear enough expectation by teachers regarding standards of presentation of pupils' written work. Good use is made of daily assessments. Pupils regularly exceed their targets because there has not been a shared understanding of the expected rate of progress in Key Stage 1 and targets have not been sufficiently high.

Learning is enjoyable because much of it is based on real life activities. Curriculum provision is good. Key learning skills are developed throughout the curriculum in a carefully planned, integrated approach. Careful attention is paid to pupils' safety. They are very well cared for and given very good pastoral support. They are less well guided in their learning because not all teachers have a clear understanding of the features of different levels of work.

The headteacher, backed by the strong staff team and governors, provides clear direction in promoting well-being and on raising standards. The school has recognised the need to develop a book culture within the school to raise standards further in writing. Leadership and management are good, leaders at all levels contribute to self evaluation, and responsibility is shared throughout the school. A very large majority of parents are supportive of the school; and the school actively works to promote relationships with parents. There is normally a waiting list for entry.

The school has good capacity to improve and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure staff develop a shared understanding of levels and expected rates of progress.
- Further engage pupils in their learning by using interactive approaches and by developing pupils' self evaluation skills.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' written work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry school is above average. Pupils in Foundation Stage make good progress and enter Key Stage 1 with standards which are well above average.

For the last five years, overall standards reached by Year 2 pupils in reading and mathematics have been significantly above average. Standards in writing dropped in 2004 but have risen since then to be almost in line with other subjects. A significant proportion of pupils attain the higher levels than pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics and reading. Standards are exceptionally high in mathematics and reading by the time pupils leave the school.

Girls outperform boys in English, but boys significantly outperformed girls in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds attain standards which are higher than similar groups nationally.

Progress throughout the school is good and pupils exceed their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school has a strong focus on personal, social and health education and on developing 'the whole child'. As a result pupils have high levels of confidence and strong self-esteem. Pupils very much enjoy school and have an enthusiastic attitude to learning. Behaviour is very good, because the school actively fosters good behaviour and pupils value and support each other. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding.

Pupils show a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of the need for physical exercise. They understand the need to take responsibility and to care for others. The school's council members take their responsibilities seriously, for example by deciding to ban the use of outdoor play equipment whilst it is wet for safety reasons. An emphasis is placed on developing a sense of value and worth. Attendance is average. The school rightly does not tolerate lateness because this causes pupils to miss learning opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, and as a result pupils make good progress. Teachers plan together and ensure that pupils in the same year receive the same learning experiences. Planned activities meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Pupils have access to appropriate practical resources to support their learning. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are developed effectively throughout the curriculum. Learning is stimulated by first hand experiences, including art, dance and drama. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to actively engage in their learning, for example through the use of 'talk partners' or by evaluating their own learning. Key features of lessons are the very good relationships between pupils and staff. This fosters pupils' confidence. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and have good expectations regarding the quantity and detail in pupils' work. However, insufficient attention is paid to ensuring pupils consistently present their work well and in some classes too many worksheets are used.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils learning and to assessing their progress. Teachers make good use of the new interactive whiteboards and use the 'voting buttons' to assess pupils' understanding. Continuous informal assessment takes place and pupils' progress is tracked closely. Formal assessments take place at the end of each year. Pupils frequently exceed their targets, because there is no shared understanding of expected rates of progress.

The school works well with parents to support their involvement in their child's learning. Homework is fun. It is linked to work in class and parents are given very good guidance in how to help their children to carry out the activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Subject areas are woven very well together so that pupils can apply their learning in a range of interesting contexts, such as a topic about the rain forest. This integration has been carefully planned to ensure that all areas of the National Curriculum are covered and that there is progression through the school. The curriculum is increasingly being delivered through first hand activities and through creative arts such as art, music and dance to enrich the pupils' experience. Each class aims to take part in a termly out of school visit and a range of visitors work with pupils in school, including a brass band, theatre groups and a recycling officer. Provision is further enriched by homework and a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' personal development and well-being is developed in circle time and during assemblies and is promoted throughout the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. In the words of one parent, 'all members of staff work really hard to ensure a safe, happy environment for both pupils and parents'. Procedures for safeguarding children effectively meet current requirements. Health and safety matters are addressed efficiently and risk assessments are carried out thoroughly. Pupils know they have someone to turn to if they have a problem. They speak with enthusiasm about the breakfast club. Good links exist with external agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Well trained staff support pupils with particular additional needs, and they are included in all activities. Transfer arrangements both pre school and with the junior school are effective. However, not all teachers have a sufficiently clear understanding of the features of different levels of work to be able to pinpoint pupils' next steps of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The clear firm vision of the head, supported by senior managers and governors has resulted in a number of improvements to provision, such as improved premises, clubs, and the introduction of 'child of the week'. The atmosphere in school is both caring and friendly, and open and transparent. The very strong staff team provide each other with a good level of support and challenge. Strategic planning is ensuring that recent improvements are embedded before new priorities are introduced. Leadership is shared throughout the school. Subject leaders are

responsible for developments in their subjects and the senior management team, healthy schools team and book culture team have responsibility for improving different aspects of the school.

Self evaluation processes are thorough and involve all stakeholders. They enabled the staff to identify the lack of interactive approaches in some lessons which the school recognises as something to work on. Performance management supports school improvement and has been refined as a result of self evaluation. The governing body is effective and has recently revised its roles in order to further improve its practice.

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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?	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	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
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?	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

14 March 2007

Dear Pupils

South Wootton First School, Church Lane, South Wootton, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 3LJ

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you all. Thank you for talking to me and showing me your work. I was impressed by the way everyone in your school works together and I could see that you are interested in learning. You are all very well behaved. Your school is a special place because your teachers really help you to have confidence.

'There are lots of good things going on in the school, and all the adults work hard to look after you and help you learn. They make lessons interesting and your learning fun. They help you all to make good progress, and I was particularly impressed with what you can do in mathematics and how well you read. I know that your headteacher and other teachers want you to do even better. I think that you could do this by talking to each other more about what you are doing when you are working together as a class, and by having the chance to think about how well you are doing in the lesson. You need to know how to improve your work even more, and I have asked your teachers to make sure that you write more neatly.'

With best wishes

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools