



Woodside First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120918
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291910
Inspection dates 22–23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	First	School address	Firs Road
School category	Community		Hethersett, Norwich
Age range of pupils	3–8		Norfolk NR9 3EQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01603 810674
Number on roll (school)	247	Fax number	01603 819015
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Simon Cooper
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Lamb
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than usual first school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds: very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Although there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities than is typical, a higher than average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The school is subject to re-organisation, and will not have Year 3 pupils after this year. On entry to the school children's attainment covers a range of skills similar to those expected nationally.

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 that is extremely well led and managed and provides exceptionally good value for money. Excellent leadership from the headteacher and highly effective support from other managers and governors are key features in the school's success. This is a cohesive school where all staff, whatever their role, contribute to an ethos that 'only the best will do'. The school rigorously assesses its performance in its pursuit of excellence and continually improving standards. An abundance of information is used highly effectively by managers at all levels to check how well every pupil is doing. Consequently, standards are consistently high and all pupils make very good progress regardless of their starting points. Nevertheless, current systems for holding this information are complex and, while immediate analysis of information is not straightforward, this structure is currently being reviewed. The vast majority of parents value the school highly: several say that the school has exceeded or surpassed their expectations. They recognise that the school goes the extra mile to support every pupil, including the most vulnerable and the gifted and talented. Those who find learning difficult are included in all aspects of school life with considerable skill and sensitivity. They make extremely good progress.

The combination of outstanding teaching and an exceptionally rich curriculum both in the Foundation Stage and in the rest of the school contributes to pupils' huge enjoyment of learning as well as their impressive progress. A strong start in the Nursery ensures that children are ready and willing to learn. Their thirst for knowledge is nurtured skilfully as they move through the school because excellent planning allows teachers to make links between subjects and to modify work to suit individuals. Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together to the benefit of all pupils. Outstanding care, guidance and support means that pupils feel totally safe and they trust adults implicitly. Consequently, their personal development and well-being are impressive. Pupils are prepared to volunteer their ideas and opinions with remarkable maturity. They have a strong sense of justice, their behaviour is impeccable and their understanding of mutual responsibility and healthy life-styles is extraordinary for their age. For example, during the inspection a pupil from Year 2 calmly and politely informed one of the inspection team that they could not sit at a particular table for lunch by saying, 'I'm sorry you can't sit there because this is the nut allergy table'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify the system for collating information about pupils' achievements so that it is easier to analyse and to identify trends.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Children make rapid progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the time they join Year 1, standards are above the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. This is because a higher proportion than

usual reach the expected goals for their age. Pupils continue to achieve extremely well in Years 1 and 2 and the most recent teachers' assessments, in 2006, show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high. As a consequence of skilful staff deployment, this impressive achievement continues in Year 3 and standards remain high. The equally strong rate of progress demonstrated by all groups of pupils, regardless of their starting points, is remarkable. The school has maintained very good achievement over recent years and pupils are on track to do extremely well again this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are tremendously sensible around school and behave extremely well in lessons. They enjoy school enormously and attendance is good. They contribute very enthusiastically and thoughtfully to the many initiatives to enrich their learning and involve themselves very well in the wider community. Pupils are highly tolerant of each other: disagreements are very rare. Increasingly pupils walk and cycle to school, enjoy physical exercise and choose what they eat with a mature awareness of a balanced diet, reflecting their exceptional willingness to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils make outstanding progress in their ability to reflect on serious issues, their understanding of right and wrong and their sense of social responsibility. They develop a very good understanding of the cultural inheritance of their local community. They enthusiastically embrace learning about other places, cultures and times and contribute wholeheartedly to activities to improve the environment of the school. Children in the Foundation Stage voice their feelings and opinions, growing rapidly in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers successfully encourage a great sense of curiosity and pupils are confident to participate totally in all that the school offers. Rigorous checks are made on pupils' learning and a close watch kept on their progress. Teachers give plenty of spoken feedback, which pupils absorb and find reassuring. They have very high expectations of how fast pupils will learn and provide them with many opportunities to discuss their work and to answer thought-provoking questions, such as questions about the books they are reading in Year 3. These features and excellent planning means learning is made very interesting and effective by links between subjects, such as developing writing skills in science and mathematics. In the Foundation Stage, work is extremely well planned to provide highly practical and interesting activities. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning by helping groups to concentrate and understand their tasks. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils who find learning difficult, or who need extra help with reading.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Highly effective links with various experts develop educational initiatives such as 'philosophy', 'mantle of the expert' and work in 'biodiversity'. These continually enrich pupils' imaginations, extend their learning and allow them to assume responsibility. Provision for learning through using the outdoor environment is outstanding throughout the school. Consequently, pupils respect the natural world, while having great fun. Their self-confidence and ability to reflect on what they are learning grows impressively as they assimilate new ideas. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to participate in clubs and other enrichment activities, including sports and music, where they develop excellent skills of working in teams. Every pupil in the school has the opportunity to play a musical instrument. Exceptional links that are made between all subjects help to deepen pupils' understanding and gain skills meaningfully. Pupils' improving knowledge is reflected and celebrated in very stimulating displays around school, for example showing work about local history, such as the story of Robert Kett. Activities for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are extremely well matched to their particular needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Assemblies are used most effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding of important matters, such as valuing ideas, respect for each other and the environment and to reward good effort, work and behaviour. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe, including the deployment of pupils as playground 'buddies' to help everyone get on really well. The school has highly effective links with other professional organisations to, for example, support pupils with additional learning needs. There are very positive relationships between the school and parents, who are always welcome in school. This allows prompt resolution of any problems their children may have. The use of the 'rainbow' room is exceptionally effective in helping pupils with emotional difficulties adjust to school life. The school helps pupils with particular talents to develop and use them most effectively. Pupils know what they have to do to improve work, but involvement in assessing their own work or that of other pupils is not consistent in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides exceptionally skilled leadership. She makes sure staff work as a strong team, sharing her powerful commitment to high standards and continual improvement. She is highly regarded by governors, staff, parents and pupils. Morale is high in spite of the impending reorganisation. The headteacher has successfully led the school through a sustained period of significant improvement, and exceptionally high standards and achievement have been maintained over recent years. This

demonstrates the school's excellent capacity for further improvement. Staff are far from complacent. Everyone is pulling together to keep increasing pupils' achievement without jeopardising their enjoyment in learning.

Governors keep an exceptionally close check on the school's work and hold it to account for its performance. They have a very astute understanding of its strengths and challenges as well as their own role. Subject leaders are working very effectively to analyse strengths and relative weaknesses in their subjects. This is a school that knows itself extremely well. Arrangements for holding information and tracking pupils' progress are under review. While comprehensive record keeping systems are managed well, there is so much information it is not always easy to extract data for immediate analysis.. Nevertheless, analysis of information is rigorous and contributes directly to school improvements. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly and accurately monitored. The school identifies the right areas for improvement, demonstrating highly effective self-evaluation.

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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?	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	1
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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.

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	1
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

24 February 2007

Dear Children

Woodside First School, Firs Road, Hethersett, Norwich, Norfolk NR9 3EQ

We enjoyed meeting you enormously when we visited your school recently. Thank you for being so kind, considerate and helpful when we spoke with you. A special thank you goes to the children who met with us in the library and in the rainbow room and talked so thoughtfully about what you like about school. We know you rate your school highly and we agree with you and your parents; we think you go to an exceptionally good school.

We found so many brilliant things about your school we can't list them all. Here are some of them.

- You all do extremely well, making really good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are very kind to each other and behave in a remarkably grown up way in lessons and around the school.
- You are very good at keeping healthy.
- Your teachers expect you to do your best all the time because they care about helping. You learn and want you to keep making such brilliant progress.
- There are loads of really interesting things for you to do, including lots of interesting work outside, special days and arts weeks and plenty of good clubs.
- You feel very safe in school because everyone works hard to keep you safe and secure.
- Mrs Lamb and governors work extremely hard to make sure all adults keep sharing good ideas and thinking of ways to make your school even better.

Mrs Lamb and the teachers keep loads of information about how well you are doing. We have asked them to think of a way of organising it that makes it easier for them to use this information to help you keep learning as well as you do.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you always enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Jill Bavin (Lead inspector), Roger Fry and John Mason