

Woodnewton- A Learning Community

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122110
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292322
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	702
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Runchman
Headteacher	Ellen Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2007
School address	Rowlett Road Corby NN17 2NU
Telephone number	01536 265173
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This much larger than average school draws most of its pupils from an area which is less advantaged than usual. The school was established in September 2006 following the amalgamation of the local infant and junior schools. Most pupils are White British with a small number who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. When starting school in the Foundation Stage (FS1/Nursery), children's attainment is below the level expected for their age.

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 with some outstanding features. In the short time since it was established, it has progressed effectively to fulfil the ideals reflected in its name and it is a learning community. The school is innovative and is receptive to new developments. Many parents praise the dedication and approachability of all staff and the care that they provide.

The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, supported by the outstanding contributions made by the senior leadership team, ensure that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher provides an excellent direction for the work of the school which enables the staff to forge ahead to create a vibrant school focused on raising standards and achievement. With her very good and continual guidance and encouragement, many developments have been successfully implemented. This is most apparent in the successful amalgamation of the new school where staff are enthusiastic and work closely together. With conscientious commitment, all levels of leadership and management, including Foundation Stage, are good. All staff set a high standard for the development of the areas for which they hold a responsibility. Staff ensure that all pupils are included in all that the school does and their needs are at the centre of all initiatives and developments planned. Teaching and learning throughout the school are good and, as a result, achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Some of the more able pupils do not do as well as they should, but most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also those in the early stages of learning English, make good progress overall.

Some of the initiatives planned are still in the early stages of development and have not had enough time to fully influence standards and achievement. The school has set up comprehensive tracking records to plot each pupil's progress and has made good use of pupils' previous records. Current records are based upon the results of the end of year tests and do not record how well each pupil is doing from one term to the next. Although lower attaining pupils are given good support, some of the more able ones are not involved sufficiently in assessing their own work and are not given learning targets to show how well they are doing or what they need to do next to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory. Subjects are taught separately in the main but leadership and management are already planning themes in which different subjects, for example, literacy, science and information and communication technology (ICT), are linked together to make learning more interesting for pupils. Currently, some of the more able pupils are not set a curriculum that is adapted enough to raise their achievement and standards. The care, support and guidance given to all pupils are good overall and there are many strong features in the way the staff care for pupils' pastoral development and foster the agenda for Every Child Matters. Consequently, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their improving attendance which is currently broadly average.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Good care, guidance and support ensure that children make a good start to their education in this key stage. Good teaching with stimulating and well structured activities results in most children making good progress to reach the goals expected for their age by the time they are ready to enter Year 1.

However, few children exceed the expected levels. Children's personal, social and emotional development, as well as the development of their language skills, is particularly good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that subjects are linked together to help pupils understand more clearly what they are being taught.
- Ensure that the more able pupils are challenged more effectively to raise achievement and standards.
- Ensure that the tracking data is updated more frequently so that teachers set specific learning targets that show each pupil how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Reception, the majority of children achieve well to reach the national goals set for them but very few exceed them. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy are below expected levels overall, because boys' reading standards are below the expected levels for their age. More able children do not always do as well as they should.

By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well and standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics. In writing, standards are above average showing good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are average but standards in writing are not quite as good as reading and this reflects the lack of opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in different subjects. Standards are slightly higher than average in mathematics, but even so, some of the more able pupils do not do as well as they should in mathematics and also in English because the curriculum is not always challenging enough. In science, standards are above average and pupils make very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very happy, enjoy their work and find their tasks interesting, especially with the use of whiteboards. They are encouraged to think about problems and to assess dangers and risks that they face.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the orderliness of the school community and towards each other's comforts and well-being. They have an excellent awareness of safe practices and their behaviour is exemplary. They show concern and tolerance towards others, promoting excellent relationships and harmony throughout the school. They have an extremely well developed sense of the needs of others, are very accepting of differences in people, and have a good understanding of local and wider cultures. Pupils have good self-confidence and are developing abilities to think for themselves about the best options they can take when faced with a choice. Pupils gain good skills that will be valuable to them in their next school and when they transfer to the world of work. Pupils' awareness of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

With strong support and guidance from year group coordinators and subject leaders, teachers assess the extent of each pupil's skills and knowledge before they plan tasks that build upon the previous learning of most pupils. Teachers in each year group work consistently well to ensure that lessons are interesting and learning is brisk. The developing use of interactive whiteboards is having a good influence upon pupils' interest in their work. For example, pupils in Year 1 were observed enthusiastically involved in 'popping' the bubbles containing the days of the week. Teachers manage behaviour very well and this results in outstanding behaviour. Marking of pupils' work is supported effectively through verbal feedback and direct intervention and helps pupils to understand what they need to do next. This guidance helps them to think out their approach to tackling problems. Support given to lower attaining pupils is thorough but sometimes more able pupils do not know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve because they are not involved enough in assessing their work and are not set specific targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Currently, most subjects are taught as separate units. The opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum are not fully developed, although some topics such as the Second World War have been planned successfully around these subjects and pupils find this approach much more stimulating.

Good emphasis on the development of pupils' thinking skills and upon the use of questions to act as someone who seeks to understand (philosopher) is having a good effect on every pupil's learning, especially in science and in problem solving activities in mathematics. The provision of part of the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness of the customs and traditions of other people in a multicultural society is not planned for well enough, although most are fully aware of people's different religions. The curriculum is adapted well for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English but it is not as challenging for the more able pupils and those who are gifted and talented. Out of lesson activities such as art and games clubs, as well as residential visits, enhance pupils' learning and attitudes very effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are strengths in the way the staff provide for each pupil's pastoral development through the excellent day-to-day care. Activities are well planned to help pupils think before they make a decision and this is most beneficial in raising their self-esteem. The school provides very well for small groups of pupils with complex needs, especially through the use of 'The Lingard' - an outdoor area. All staff ensure that the pupils remain safe and child protection procedures are good. Risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe are carried out conscientiously. The 'Forest School project', the 'Go project' and 'Cool Talk' (to improve communication between home and school) add significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development. Parents are welcomed and many come to courses offered by the school to enable them to help their children at home.

The compiling of data about each pupil's progress is in an early stage of development. Current records which are based upon the results of tests for the end of each year are thorough and accurate. They are easily interpreted and with good analysis each pupil's progress is plotted effectively. These records are not extended to ensure more frequent updating so that all pupils continue to make sufficient progress from term to term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership and management throughout the amalgamation of the two schools and has very successfully established new routines and procedures. She has communicated excellently with all parents and the wider community throughout developments and maintained their support. Year group coordinators, leaders for different aspects of school life and subject leaders all provide good leadership and management for their subjects. Staff are effectively involved in the review and planning of the areas for which they have responsibility. All staff and governors access the school improvement plan online and, consequently, it is frequently updated and the school's evaluation is seen as an on-going process to ensure that developments continue to be met. Self-evaluation, through effective monitoring and evaluation, is good and reliable.

Through the expertise of many members of staff, the school demonstrates dedication to remain at the forefront of educational developments. For example, the development of pupils' thinking and philosophy skills has had a significant effect upon their decision-making skills.

The senior leadership team has compiled good tracking records for each pupil but as yet these records are not updated frequently enough to identify pupils who are not making as much progress as expected. The governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. It knows clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Woodnewton – A Learning Community, Rowlett Road, Corby, NN17 2NU

- Thank you for helping the inspectors and myself when we visited yesterday. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a good education and that you do some very exciting things. These are the things that are particularly good:
- Your headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. All staff support her very well. She has very clear ideas about the future developments and has made many good things happen since the school was opened last year.
- You make good progress and your work in science is very good but it could be better in English and mathematics. Some of you who find work easy to do need to be given work that is more challenging.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other. You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- You are very polite and your behaviour is excellent.
- Staff look after you and care for you well.
- The teaching is good and the teachers are making your learning interesting, especially with the whiteboards and ICT.
- There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:
 - link subjects together to help you understand them more
 - ensure that your teachers set you targets that show you what you need to do next and how well you are doing with your work now.

You can also help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better. Once again, thank you for your cooperation.

Graeme Bassett Lead Inspector

Annex B

14 September 2007

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Graeme Bassett
Lead Inspector