

Woodlands Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135031
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	294258
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Wolstenholme
Headteacher	Sarah Bentley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wensley Green Woodside Telford TF7 5NW
Telephone number	01952 386070
Fax number	01952 386071

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school that recently opened following the amalgamation of infant and junior schools. It serves an area of significant deprivation and the proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is broadly average but is increasing. There is a Nursery class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is given a Notice to Improve. Despite recent improvements Woodlands Primary School is not providing an adequate education for its pupils. Significant improvements are required in relation to the pupils' achievement and standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards are inadequate. Achievement is satisfactory but uneven through Years 1 to 2. Pupils' progress is slow in Years 3 and 4, where pupils fall too far behind and are unable to make up all the lost ground when they are in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, by the time they reach the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally low. Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is inadequate. These years have suffered from a lack of consistent leadership and management and the curriculum does not address all the areas of learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. School leaders have carefully monitored the quality of teaching and learning and accurately identified exactly where the weaknesses lie. Strategies to improve teaching and learning, including working closely with the local authority, have resulted in important improvements in practice in some areas. Nevertheless, there is still too much inadequate teaching and not enough good teaching. Expectations are not high enough. Work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and there is insufficient challenge for middle and higher attaining pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because their needs are properly planned for and they are well supported by classroom assistants. The curriculum is satisfactory. Major improvements have been made to reduce the use of worksheets and ensure that more interesting activities are provided which build on previous learning. However, what is planned is not always taught adequately. A good range of visits, visitors and special events is making school much more interesting and exciting for pupils.

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Parents, pupils and staff recognise that pupils' attitudes and behaviour have significantly improved and pupils now come into lessons ready to learn. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and enable pupils to gain confidence and feel safe. Pupils say they find school enjoyable. They are very aware of how to keep healthy. Pupils are looked after very well indeed; however, care, guidance and support are only satisfactory overall because information about how well pupils are doing is not used enough to improve progress.

There has been some resistance to change but the dogged determination of the headteacher and senior managers has resulted in increasing numbers of staff and parents recognising the value of the important improvements that have been made. A new school is emerging with its own distinct and optimistic culture. Parents find the school very accessible. A typical parent comment was that the school has 'got better over the last few years' and if we have a problem we can 'pop in anytime'. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders work very well as a team and have a steadfast commitment to improvement. This, together with secure self-evaluation and recent improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the curriculum and management procedures, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations, ensuring that lesson activities are closely matched to the needs of pupils and deliver effectively what is planned.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards and achievement are inadequate. The school has identified that the checking of pupils' skills and rate of learning has not been robust enough in the Nursery and Reception classes and that children are not making enough progress particularly in the Nursery class. Progress in Years 1 to 2 is satisfactory although uneven and by the end of Year 2, standards are just below average. Pupils fall further behind in Years 3 and 4. They make better progress in Years 5 and 6 because of good teaching, but are unable to make up for so much lost ground. By the end of Year 6 standards are exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. School leadership has focused on improving pupils' progress in writing and mathematics and there are early indications of improved achievement particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Parents and pupils recognise the significant achievement of the headteacher and the staff team in securing important improvements to the attitudes and behaviour of older pupils. Although the number of exclusions is still relatively high, a calm ethos has been achieved and most pupils behave well. Pupils and parents report that the incidences of bullying are falling but some pupils are still not very nice to each other. Attitudes to learning are now positive especially where teaching is exciting and allows pupils to make progress. For example, older pupils are now writing comments like 'I love maths' in their books. Although attendance levels are below average they are improving because pupils are enjoying school more. Pupils say that they like school and talk excitedly about the visits and the different activities. They know how to keep safe and are well informed about healthy eating and enjoy taking exercise. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is satisfactory. Pupils have enjoyed the enterprise activities and they are developing far more positive attitudes towards school but their future success is held back by their low standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Across the school, there is too much inadequate teaching and not enough good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and help them catch up. Nevertheless teaching overall has improved from a very low base and there are pockets of good teaching where children are actively involved in learning. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and their praise and encouragement are helping pupils to have much better attitudes to learning. Planning is often good but what is planned is not always taught effectively. Teachers' expectations are often not high enough

and teachers sometimes presume that if pupils are quiet and occupied they are learning successfully. However, this is not always the case and work is not always providing effective challenge for middle and higher attaining pupils. Teaching assistants are providing good support for lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and this ensures that these pupils usually make at least satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Nursery and Reception classes not all areas of learning are robustly planned for or effectively delivered. In Years 1 to 6 curriculum planning is much improved and ensures that activities are more exciting and pupils' learning builds upon their prior experiences. Plans have been made to link subjects together to make learning more relevant and enjoyable for the pupils, but these links are not consistently seen in lessons or pupils' work. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is improving. Specific days and weeks that provide numerous interesting activities associated with health education, science, art, enterprise and many more subjects motivate pupils and make learning far more exciting than in the usual lessons. Provision for pupils' personal development contributes well to their understanding of staying safe and keeping healthy. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the good range of visits, visitors and clubs that effectively extend their learning experiences and contribute well to their personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. Good work in the 'Greenland room' enhances pupils' personal development. The school works well with external agencies to provide extra help for pupils with learning difficulties when this is required. The school has only just introduced monitoring of pupils' academic progress. Although this has helped the school to accurately identify where underachievement is occurring the information is not yet used effectively enough to improve the progress of individual pupils. Teachers' marking and the use of targets do not always help pupils to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory monitoring and self-evaluation have ensured that the school's leadership team is very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has carefully thought-out plans to address the important issues facing the school. Many essential policies and management procedures have been put in place and are starting to enhance provision. Monitoring of teaching is satisfactory and has accurately identified areas of weaknesses. However, improvements to achievement and standards and teaching have been slow as the headteacher and the leadership team have had to work steadfastly to overcome some resistance to new ways of working. Nevertheless, school leaders have secured improvements to pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the curriculum and some aspects of teaching. The school has created very strong partnerships with others, including the local authority, parents, the community and outside agencies. These have secured improvements to pupils' personal development, led to a more exciting curriculum

and enhanced standards of care. Governors meet their statutory duties and are very supportive of the school. They are just starting to provide more rigorous challenge.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	3

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?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Telford TF7 5NW

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We are pleased that you like school and we know that most of you work hard. You clearly enjoy your visits to interesting places and you told us that you like all the new exciting activities including the special art and science weeks. It is good that you are trying hard to eat healthily and enjoy exercise. Your teachers and your parents told us that your behaviour is much better – Well done! You told us that there is much less bullying but we noticed that some pupils still need to try harder to be nice to one another. At the moment your school is not providing you with a satisfactory education but the staff at your school are working hard to improve the situation. That is why we have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that inspectors will come back to check that you are getting a better quality of education. At the moment, your standards in English, mathematics and science are a long way behind those achieved by pupils in other schools. You are not making enough progress because teaching and learning are not good enough. We have asked your teachers to improve teaching by making sure that the work you are set is not too easy or too hard and that they always provide the activities that have been planned.

We have also asked your teachers to make sure that children in the Nursery and Reception classes have more interesting things to do that help them learn successfully. Managers in your school are working hard to make your school much better and your school is already starting to improve. You could help them by working even harder, making sure you always behave well and coming to school regularly.

Thank you again for being such good company.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh Lead inspector