

Woodfield Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132818
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	302299
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Cartwright HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	572
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shirley Jones
Headteacher	Alwyne Jolly
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Studley Road Redditch B98 7HH
Telephone number	01527 527081
Fax number	01527 516586

Age group	9–13
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most middle schools. One in four pupils is eligible for free school meals, higher than the national proportion. Many pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. One in three pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is average. There are higher than average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Woodfield Middle School is an effective school with some outstanding features that is providing good quality education to all its pupils. The welcoming school working environment is characterised by harmonious, good-humoured relationships between pupils and with staff. Good teaching is delivered through a good formal school curriculum that is extensively enhanced by outstanding extra provision. Academic standards are rising faster than the national rate throughout the four years pupils enjoy at the school, and pupils achieve well. Every available surface of corridors and classrooms is covered with fresh, high quality display that celebrates pupils' work, and informs and intrigues pupils and visitors alike. For example, a science laboratory is a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave' of interesting objects, samples, artefacts, ongoing experiments, plants, apparatus, display and poster work by pupils. Extra-curricular activities are varied, with the vast majority of pupils participating in sporting, performing arts or academically based projects. Their preparation for a future healthy lifestyle is, as a consequence, outstanding. The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding, exemplified in the excellent progress made by children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers use their expertise and enthusiasm for their subjects to good effect. Thanks to effective intervention by school staff and local authority welfare officers, attendance continues to improve. Information and communication technology (ICT) supports most teaching, and is used extensively by pupils for their research and writing. There are good examples of planning for pupils at different stages in their understanding based on good ongoing assessment of their learning, but not in all lessons yet. There are also examples of good marking, where teachers give explicit advice on improving the work and insist that pupils follow it up. However there are also examples of mundane remarks that are repeated over time, indicating that pupils are not always taking much notice of teachers' comments.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. The issues for improvement from the previous inspection have been effectively dealt with. Prudent financial management of money has created a delightful learning environment, and effective measures to ensure staff stability of classes have been taken. Newly qualified staff are very well supported. The overall quality of monitoring and evaluation is good, with outstanding practice evident in the work in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Here, evidence of outcomes for pupils both academically and pastorally is used to further focus work, and demonstrate its effectiveness. Governors have provided good direction and support as the school develops from its inception in 2001.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of lesson planning for different abilities and prior knowledge of pupils so that all are engaged in personally challenging activities.
- Improve the rigour of some marking to match the best practice of the majority, so that pupils know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good, because pupils are consistently well taught throughout their time at the school. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 (in first schools) are lower than average, and are still below average as they enter the school in Year 5.

Standards at Key Stage 2 (end of Year 6) are broadly average, with those in science significantly higher, and by the end of Year 8 are well on track to slightly above average standards overall. English standards in 2006 at Key Stage 2 were lower than expected, connected to previous difficulties in recruiting a head of subject, but this has been successfully resolved.

Taken over their four years at school pupils are making good progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are actually doing exceptionally well, and pupils from Pakistani backgrounds attain higher standards than the school average. The very good mentoring by experienced staff who know these children and their families very well is a key reason for their success.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils say they feel safe, and that the school deals effectively with bullying when it is made aware of a problem. Behaviour in and around the school is good, with only a few instances of over-exuberance outside at break and lunchtimes. Most pupils say the school is using its rewards and sanctions policy consistently and fairly. Exclusions are decreasing to very low levels, because of effective early intervention via the Nurture Group. Attendance is good, and continuing to improve, because of close monitoring by the school, including first-day absence calls home, and good work by the dedicated education welfare officer. There are now no attendance differences between pupils of different backgrounds.

One outstanding feature is the richness of additional experiences enjoyed by all pupils in sports, arts and drama. The coordination of sports activities is excellent, allowing the school to know the extent of out-of-school participation and involves local sports clubs in this plan. This is ensuring that pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Food provided by the school is varied and includes healthy options, although many pupils choose to bring snack foods to school. The school council contributes ideas to the school, and has helped in changes to supply teaching arrangements, although there is scope for greater independence of this council. The school arranges for some pupils to take on roles of responsibility. Some older pupils help younger pupils with reading.

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The pace of most lessons is high, and they feature a wide range of activities, including good use of question and answer by teachers, and pair and group work between pupils. Teachers have established good relations with their pupils, who behave well and value the support they receive from the staff. Planning does not always include different tasks and activities for the different levels of ability within their classes; as a result some lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for every child.

Pupils make good progress; they know how well they are doing, what their targets for improvement are, and what they need to do to achieve them. However, day-to-day marking is variable; while the majority of examples show regular and detailed written comments about specific points which pupils need to address in order to raise the standard of their work, some are less informative. In some cases, pupils are not always responding to the advice given as they should. The school carefully monitors the quality of teaching provision it delivers, although this does not always focus sharply enough on the impact teaching is having upon pupils' learning and progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school provides a good range of courses for its pupils. Pupils are able to make good progress in their acquisition of basic skills, including the use of ICT, which is a big improvement since the previous inspection. The wide range of links the school has established with local companies enables it to provide pupils with outstanding opportunities for work-related learning. Pupils enjoy taking part in a good variety of out-of-school activities, including subject-related trips and visits, as well as cultural and sporting events. The personal commitment of staff to these extra activities is very good.

The library makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development; the school has succeeded in stimulating pupils' enthusiasm for reading by providing a range of resources and activities which are very well matched to their interests. The school monitors carefully the take-up of books, which is increasing over time.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy outstanding care, guidance and support. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust, and child protection procedures are well understood. Risk assessments are attended to, and the school offers its pupils a safe and very well maintained environment for learning.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding, because there are innovative approaches and thorough plans to help them improve, and individual specialist teaching is well targeted. Individual education plans are precise and well used to ensure progress, and the involvement of parents supports this work. As a result pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress. The Nurture Group provides outstanding support

for the most vulnerable pupils, and there is clear positive impact on their attendance, behaviour and engagement. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority.

The school has a large team of well motivated and trained teaching assistants who support learners effectively in lessons. The evaluation of work with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exemplary, enabling the school to invest in what works and so further increase impact. Learners with English as an additional language benefit from specialist support for language learning, and make good progress. Pupils' needs are very carefully and accurately assessed when they join the school, and appropriate learning is planned.

The school has thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress, and pupils know the level they are working at and how to improve. Some pupils have a mentor who supports their welfare. Arrangements for transition to their next school are thorough. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to ensure appropriate care and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has clear and successful strategic plans to improve the stability and quality of teaching in the face of challenges in recruitment and retention. The school has invested to provide in-house cover for absent staff, and sees continuity of staffing as a priority. Because of this strong support for teachers and support staff by senior leaders, there is an equally strong commitment to the school by staff, evident in their additional work in out-of-hours activities. The school has used its resources exceptionally efficiently to maintain and develop good quality buildings and classrooms, as well as maintain relatively small class sizes.

The school's support for newly qualified teachers is outstanding; the school provides thorough and well developed systems for induction and ongoing support. This enables teachers new to the profession to settle quickly and contribute well to the school. Governors know close details of school performance, and have good systems to confirm the information provided by the school. Governors systematically visit their areas of oversight to confirm the reports they receive from staff. School improvement planning contains many good ideas, but not every strand has clear pupil or performance outcome targets, which makes evaluation of success or otherwise quite difficult.

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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 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	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	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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?	2
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?	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	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

13 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodfield Middle School, Redditch, Worcestershire. B98 7HH

Thank you for your polite welcome and delightful conversations we had with many of you during our visit to your school. Your school is providing you with a good education, academically and also in broader areas of your personal development. We were particularly impressed by the range and quality of your work that is on display around the school, as well as all sorts of other helpful displays of objects and art. The range of additional activities in sports, arts, drama, music and subject clubs is outstanding and is setting you up very well for a healthy future lifestyle. We can see why most of you enjoy school so much; there are so many different things to interest you! This is entirely due to the hard work and commitment your teachers and support staff give to helping you learn. You are fortunate to be at a school where care, guidance and support are so excellent.

The school has provided better ICT since the previous inspection, which we agree with you is helping to make lessons more interesting. The new 'profile' in which you keep a record of your progress is a really good idea that will help you keep on track towards your targets. We think you will make even better progress when more lessons give you tasks that match your talents and abilities from the start of the lessons. Teachers mark your work well, on the whole, but sometimes their comments are not as helpful as they might be. And you should try to take more notice of comments, for example if you are asked to 'finish work off'.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright Her Majesty's Inspector