

Woodford Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103068
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	308207
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Hilary Came
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Powell
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Sunset Avenue Woodford Green IG8 0ST
Telephone number	020 8504 1629
Fax number	020 8505 5532

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school admits pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Over 20 home languages are represented in the school although few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. The school has a larger than average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties; most of these pupils have speech and language problems. Seven pupils have statements of special educational needs and have either medical disabilities, autistic tendencies or behavioural problems. The school has experienced significant staff changes in recent years including the appointment of a new headteacher in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils. It does much to enhance pupils' personal skills through good pastoral support but needs to secure consistent improvement in pupils' academic development. Among a number of positive aspects, parents are particularly pleased with the friendly atmosphere. As one wrote, 'Because the school is small there is definitely a community atmosphere and bond not only among children and teachers, but parents too.' Inspection evidence confirmed that pupils' personal development is good because of the strengths in the pastoral care provided.

In recent years, staff turnover has disrupted pupils' learning. The school is now on an even keel and standards are improving steadily. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and they are prepared well for Year 1. For some years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have declined at the end of Year 2, but improved teaching has reversed this trend and standards are now average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress and, by the time they leave the school, they are working at average levels in English and mathematics. The improvements made this year are the result of clearer guidance, from the headteacher and deputy, about planning. Additionally, the introduction of a tracking system has enabled senior staff to identify any underachievement and to call staff to account for any shortcomings. The pace of improvement has quickened because of these positive actions. However, not all managers are sufficiently involved in monitoring.

Teachers relate well to the pupils and encourage good behaviour. Pupils work cooperatively, listen carefully and keenly answer questions. In good lessons, teachers engage the pupils through practical activities. In some lessons, however, pupils sit for too long on the carpet and do not get down to work quickly enough. Teaching assistants provide good support, and work well with individuals or small groups to enhance learning. This is particularly the case when working with pupils who have behavioural problems or who struggle with communication skills. Those who are at an early stage of learning English also benefit from good support and they grow in confidence. However, teachers do not use assessment and marking to pinpoint the next steps in pupils' learning and to set sufficiently challenging work. Consequently, progress is sometimes uneven, presentation is untidy and work is spoiled by poor handwriting. The inconsistencies in teaching are the result of lack of monitoring and support in the past, a situation that has improved in recent months.

Pupils enjoy school and get on well together. They are especially proud of their successes in sporting and other competitions. They have a good awareness of how to keep safe and healthy. Older pupils take seriously their responsibility as playground friends to support the less confident. These good personal qualities contribute to making the school a happy and caring place. The pupils say that they have few worries about bullying and rough play.

The headteacher and deputy have ensured that there are good policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Governors are now much more aware of the school's work. Timely improvements have been made, however targets are not yet sufficiently challenging and the priorities identified in the school's strategic plan lack precision.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Nursery and Reception classes often work together enabling older children to support their younger friends. The children are friendly, helpful and at ease in the school. Children's skills and levels of understanding vary widely when they start school. Overall, they are a little below those expected for their age, especially in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most are working at levels expected for their age. The children like and trust the adults working with them. Teaching is good. Staff provide a balance of activities that enables children to learn independently and to be taught in groups. They make accurate observations of the children and use the information to plan activities, such as observing mini-beasts, which stimulate children's curiosity. Parents speak highly of the ways in which staff support and encourage their children. One parent, whose daughter initially struggled to settle, wrote, 'She is now a very happy and outgoing little girl who enjoys going to Nursery.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress by improving the quality of teaching and learning, focusing on better pace, productivity and presentation.
- Sharpen up leadership and governance so that all are involved in checking on the work of the school, identifying priorities more clearly and setting challenging targets.
- Make better use of assessment and marking to set challenging work and to guide pupils on how to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. The decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been reversed and pupils now achieve satisfactorily. The gap between boys' and girls' performance has narrowed because of more practical opportunities which help boys to learn. Progress has been uneven in the past and pupils' learning has been disrupted by high staff turnover. In the current more settled climate, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Those with communication and behavioural difficulties are well supported and make good progress because this aspect of the school's work is well managed. The school makes a good difference to the progress of those at an early stage of speaking English by providing intensive support. One of these pupils said, 'I like it here - the teacher helps me.' Nonetheless, there remain several challenges for staff in increasing the rate of pupils' progress, not least because expectations about productivity and the presentation of work are not high enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of moral and social issues. They behave well and show much respect for others. They are keen to support charities, enjoy learning about other cultures and contribute much to school life through their involvement in sport and other activities. Pupils

say that they feel secure because bullying is rare and that the staff listen to their worries. As part of their understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, the school council have been active in introducing bike sheds and in developing play leaders who support vulnerable pupils in the playground. Academically, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their next schools. Pupils work together well in sport and have a good sense of teamwork. They are eager to do well and proud of their school and their achievements. There has been good improvement in attendance since the previous inspection.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All staff use praise and encouragement effectively to promote good behaviour. There are examples of good teaching. In Year 5, the teacher skilfully identified gaps in pupils' knowledge and, through robust questioning and challenging tasks, moved learning on at a good pace and encouraged good self assessment. There are some inconsistencies in teaching. Planning has improved and resulted in some improvements to learning although marking and assessment are still weak. Teachers rarely make comments on the pupils' work to show them how to improve. Support staff meet the needs of vulnerable pupils through well-focused questions and individual support for those who find it hard to concentrate. However, some lessons lack sufficient challenge and the pace drifts, especially when pupils spend long periods listening on the carpet.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils participate enthusiastically in the good range of extra-curricular activities. They eagerly learn new sporting techniques from specialist coaches. They enjoy practical work and remember fondly their visits and visitors to the school. Pupils have a good awareness of personal, social and health education and have contributed much to the Healthy School award. The school uses national guidelines to plan the curriculum and pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about the subjects. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Most parents are confident that their children are cared for well, although a few have unfounded concerns about supervision at playtimes. The inspectors, and most other parents, agree with one who said, 'Any problems or concerns are always dealt with immediately.' The links forged through workshops when parents learn alongside their children contribute much to the good levels of support. Staff support vulnerable pupils well and the school is quick to identify and support those with particular learning needs. They have good awareness of child protection and keep up to date on safeguarding procedures. Leaders have recently improved some aspects of assessment and have identified gaps in pupils' performance but few teachers use this information to guide pupils on how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has made a good start on improving the school, ably supported by the deputy. Having identified key weaknesses, they have made improvements to teaching and raised the staff's and pupils' expectations. The headteacher has the confidence of stakeholders and they are working together to improve progress and standards. There has been insufficient monitoring of the schools' work and subject leaders have not played a significant part in evaluating its effectiveness. The headteacher has already provided training for these staff and set well focused plans in motion to remedy this weakness. The renewed enthusiasm among middle managers is making an impact on learning, which is now more consistent across the school and is resulting in improved quality and standards and is an illustration of the school's good capacity to improve. Parents are pleased about recent improvements and most appreciate the improved communication that has helped them to become involved in their children's learning.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

01 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodford Green Primary School, Woodford Green, IG8 0ST

Thank you helping us when we visited your school. You helped to make our visit enjoyable. It was very interesting listening to you talk about the school and we enjoyed looking at your work. We were pleased that you all get on well together. It was good to know that you feel safe and are not worried about rough play or bullying.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education and it is improving. Some of its work is good and you help by making it feel like a happy place.

- Your behaviour is good; you are polite and well mannered.
- You listen well when your teachers are talking and are keen to answer questions.
- Children in the Foundation Stage unit enjoy lots of activities to help them to learn through play.
- You are successful in sport and other competitions.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

We have found some things that would help to improve your school. We have asked the teachers and governors to keep a closer check on the school's work and to decide what need to be the next steps to make the school better. We would also like the teachers to give you more guidance when they mark your work and to make sure that they make better use of the time in lessons. You can help by always doing your best and by making your work neat and well presented.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sean O'Toole

Lead Inspector