

# The Woodsetton School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103879
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	308446
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 October –1 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Thompson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Westwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Philip Rhind-Tutt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Tipton Road Woodsetton Dudley DY3 1BY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818265
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who was accompanied by three shadowing inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and approximately a quarter are eligible for free school meals. All pupils have statements of special educational need and a small number of pupils currently attend local primary schools on a part-time basis as part of the school's integration policy. The school caters for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, including speech and language disorders. Over the last few years, the needs of pupils have become more complex, and in some of the younger classes there are a number of pupils with more severe learning difficulties. The nature of the pupils' disabilities means that most are working well below national expectations. A few pupils are looked after by the local authority.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Pupils at Woodsetton School make good progress in their work and social skills. This is because teachers provide interesting activities in lessons and carefully base work on what children have learnt before. The highly structured 'small steps' curriculum helps to identify what pupils need to learn next and offers the opportunity for pupils to gain knowledge and understanding at a different pace dependent on their needs. Progress in English is stronger than in mathematics and other subjects and gives pupils a positive foundation for the next stages of learning and development. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They need more help to behave well in less structured times. If any have particular difficulties with socialising appropriately, the school implements individual support plans. These, supplemented by the use of materials designed to help social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and the counselling service, effectively help identified pupils to make friends and sustain positive relationships. The high staffing ratios and clear structures successfully support pupils in their learning. However, planned reduction of support so that pupils can become more responsible for themselves and less dependent on adults does not happen often enough.

Pupils really enjoy school because they often have fun while they are learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of active pursuits at lunchtimes and are very keen to take part. These, in conjunction with learning about healthy food and drink, have helped pupils to develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils were keen to explain this to inspectors and even corrected each other when one pupil suggested having a fizzy drink! The pupils are beginning to be more involved in decision making at the school but this is still limited.

All staff are highly committed to the care and guidance of pupils and keep them safe. The school makes sure other professionals with different expertise are involved when pupils need this. Staff give suitable guidance to pupils but do not involve them enough in making decisions or knowing and reviewing their targets. Although a few parents do not think school-to-home communication is always good enough, most parents are rightly very positive about the school. They are grateful for the support their child and family receive. One parent summed this up by stating, 'I cannot thank the school enough for all their support in all aspects of my child's learning'.

Staff as a whole have maintained good provision even though self-evaluation lacks rigour. The headteacher does not have a detailed or accurate view of the strengths and areas for development at the school, in terms of the progress of the pupils and the quality of teaching. The expertise of classroom staff and their focus on the needs of individuals has helped to maintain a good standard of education. Previous highly effective and detailed analysis of pupils' progress has stopped and has been replaced with a new system that has yet to provide useful information to help set challenging targets. The school has made adequate progress since the last inspection and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

At the time of the inspection, there were too few children in the Foundation Stage to report on progress. Children enjoy their lessons and the work is carefully planned to meet their abilities. The curriculum is good. Two advanced skills teachers are successfully refining the curriculum

to allow greater flexibility for pupils with differing levels of need and to help Year 1 provision build more successfully on the Foundation Stage areas of learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Undertake systematic tracking of pupils' progress and lesson observations to support rigorous self-evaluation.
- Raise the level of challenge through effective and rigorous evaluation to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Enable pupils to reduce their dependence on adults and help them to take on more responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Taking into account their starting points and time at the school, pupils make good progress. There is some uneven progress within Key Stage 2 but across the key stage, pupils make good progress. Progress is consistently strong across younger year groups. Pupils achieve particularly well in English and this is supported by carefully designed additional interventions. Progress in science and information communication technology (ICT) is also good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics. There are a few pupils who excel in all subjects and make outstanding progress. This is evident in their academic work and social skills. A few of these pupils are benefiting from spending regular time in mainstream schools, and they continue to make good progress while the level of support they require is reducing. Although language development is a priority for the school, there is inconsistency in the use of communication strategies, for example, in the signing or use of symbols and pictures to support learning across the subjects.

The school uses a variety of systems, including analysis of P-level descriptors, to track progress. Monitoring of this at a whole-school level is not robust and it is difficult to determine the difference in progress of different groups of pupils. This is partly due to a change in the system being used and weaknesses around moderation that still need to be addressed. From sampling by inspectors, pupils from different groups make good progress, although there are some higher-achieving pupils whose progress is not always challenged as much as it could be.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn to work together and cooperate well. They have very good relationships with each other and with adults. They respond well to opportunities planned to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Behaviour in lessons is extremely good. The school successfully helps the pupils gain confidence and develop an interest in learning. Many parents comment on how much their children enjoy school and grow in self-confidence. The good structures and high levels of staffing help pupils to stay safe and enable good levels of guidance for pupils. Carefully planned programmes to aid social skills are effective but there are too few opportunities for pupils to resolve issues for themselves and become less reliant on adult support. Pupils say they feel safe and know what to do if they need help. Learning to keep safe is promoted through good extra-curricular opportunities, for example, working with the safety team.

Pupils have an outstanding awareness of what helps them to keep healthy and they eat well when in school. There is a developing role for pupils in helping to move the school forward via

the recently established school council. Pupils are keen to make decisions about improving their environment. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. Some relish particular lessons and others are very keen to be with their friends at break times. For the majority, attendance is good. There is a small group of pupils who do not attend frequently enough but as a result of effective support most of this group are making good improvements in their attendance.

Pupils are given more responsibility as they move up through the school and there is a suitable focus in Year 6 to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, so that by age 11 they are well prepared to leave the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers are very clear about the levels at which pupils are working, even though the school's managers do not have a close oversight of this. This effectively enables them to plan short, focused activities that involve pupils in active ways of learning. Relationships in classes are exemplary and pupils enjoy learning. All staff are very consistent in offering positive instructions and praise that makes it clear to pupils what is expected of their behaviour. Teachers do not always clearly explain what they want pupils to learn and how long this will take.

Successful planning ensures lessons meet the differing needs of pupils. Teachers ask questions at different levels and activities require different levels of understanding. Some teachers use additional support in the form of pictures or symbols, signing or actions to ensure all pupils can understand what is being said and so that all pupils can give responses. This is not consistent across the school. Expectations are usually good, although at times there are missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils and reduce their reliance on adult help. Teaching assistants make sure pupils are actively involved in learning. They clearly understand the levels that pupils are working at and this helps them to support pupils to make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum offers a good breadth of experience for all the pupils. Group targets, within a topic-based approach in younger groups and subject-based lessons in older classes, enable pupils to access a wide curriculum. Recent good adaptations are starting to make sure there are more opportunities to provide for a wider range of abilities and ensure progression across the school. A strong feature of the curriculum is the use of other professionals, for example, for additional music tuition. Curriculum planning also ensures there is good use of outside resources and visits. These make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

Planning demonstrates good use of ICT across the curriculum and the introduction of interactive whiteboards has enhanced this. There are very good additional opportunities during the school day, including sports and physical activities. Pupils' participation and enthusiasm for these are high. Pupils particularly enjoy the sports coach sessions and busy kids activities at lunchtimes. There are no additional opportunities outside the school day. Music and other creative arts performances further supplement the curriculum. The pupils enjoy taking part in these activities, including annual performances for the local community.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are good. Pupils feel they get help when they need it and the way staff interact with pupils is very positive and encouraging. The high commitment to keeping pupils safe is reflected by the good systems for risk assessments, for example, for school visits and swimming lessons. Liaison between the school and outside agencies when pupils require additional support is very good. Examples of this are the involvement of the speech and language therapy service, and the school counsellor, who work effectively with staff at the school to meet the needs of individual pupils. The school meets statutory regulations for safeguarding pupils.

Seeking parents' views is systematic during annual review meetings and when there have been some proposed changes to the organisation of the school. Anonymous consultation with parents has not taken place over the last 18 months. Helping pupils to understand what they need to do to make progress is less well developed. Pupils are not consistently involved in knowing and reviewing their key targets or in decision making in their annual reviews.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The strength of the small school team has helped to maintain a good quality of education for pupils. Classroom staff are passionate about education for the pupils and will work hard to meet the needs of all individuals. Training and support for new staff have been good and have helped to ensure lessons are usually of good quality. However, the lack of challenge to existing practices from the senior leaders has meant that the school has only made adequate improvement since the last inspection. The school has not maximised the opportunity to build upon previous success.

The monitoring and evaluation, including lesson observations, is haphazard. There is some good monitoring, for example, in the analysis of pupils' attendance, where swift action occurs if needed. Similarly, curriculum developments are based on a good identification of need. These are heavily reliant on individuals and do not arise from an effective whole-school strategy for improvement. Previous detailed analysis of pupils' progress across the school is now no longer in place. The new system has yet to be embedded and staff are not confident in applying the criteria consistently. Therefore, the progress of different groups has not been challenged rigorously. Evaluation of the improvement plan is not carried out in terms of how it has improved the outcomes for pupils.

The key areas for development identified at the last inspection have been addressed. However, other important issues raised within the report have not been addressed with sufficient urgency. The rate of improvement in the school has slowed since the last inspection. Governors have been concentrating on external factors relating to possible school reorganisation and have not sustained the role of challenge that has been evident in the past. They are in the early stages of refocusing their role as 'critical friends'.

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## Annex A

## 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	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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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**

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodsetton School, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 1BY

Thank you for making us so welcome during the inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and being able to see your work. We think your school is good. You make good progress in your work and social skills. Many of your parents also think this and they told us about it.

Woodsetton helps many of you feel much more confident so that you can enjoy learning. You behave well and work hard in school.

Just as you told us, lessons are fun and teachers make sure you learn new things and practise those you have already learnt. You have lots of different subjects and topics that make learning interesting.

You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy. We were especially pleased that so many of you join in 'busy kids' and other sports activities.

We are glad you have a school council and are involved in some decision making but would like you to have more opportunities. We have asked staff to involve you more in understanding your own targets. We have also asked them to help you learn how to make more decisions for yourselves so that you do not always need an adult to help you.

We have asked the headteacher to make sure he looks at the progress you all make more carefully so that he can set some targets to help you and staff know how much more you can achieve. We also think he needs more information so that together the staff and governors will know how to improve the school more quickly.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)