

Woodlands Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104053
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308493
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Lloyd
Headteacher	Jackie Cannings
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Woodlands Lane Shirley Solihull B90 2PX
Telephone number	01217 442840
Fax number	01217 337922

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, and investigated the following issues: •the impact of the school's actions to improve achievement, especially for boys •the quality of academic guidance for all groups of pupils •how accurately the school's leaders and managers have identified its strengths and most pressing priorities. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data, school documents and parents' questionnaires. In addition, there were discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Woodlands Infant School is situated in a residential area. It has childcare facilities on the premises. The majority of pupils are White British, with the remainder from other minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The school has received the following awards in recognition of its work: Healthy School Standard, Investors in People, Investors in Communities, Artsmark, and Activemark. The school is on the way to achieving the ICT Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodlands Infants is an exceptional school where purposeful leadership and dedicated staff enable pupils of all ages and abilities to receive an outstanding quality of education. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very complimentary about the school. Many recognise and appreciate that their children flourish because the staff put the children's academic and personal developmental needs at the heart of all they do. This comment was typical of a number of others received from parents: 'Since my son has been at Woodlands, he has gained confidence and grown socially. I highly recommend the school and teachers.'

When children start in the Nursery, their performance in all six areas of learning is at the expected level. Staff in the Foundation Stage give particular attention to language, mathematics and personal development and this leads to outstanding progress. On entry to Year 1, many children exceed the expected levels. This rate of progress continues because of excellent provision. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are significantly higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the 2007 Year 2 teacher assessments, more than half the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading. Almost half achieved this higher level in writing and mathematics.

One of the many strengths of the school is the way it identifies and tackles areas of relative weakness. Following an analysis of assessment information, the school recognised that the standard of boys' writing was lower than that of the girls. The staff introduced new strategies for teaching writing and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and each other's work. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes. In one excellent session, the teacher successfully used music and a video clip before asking the pupils to discuss and write down their ideas for a 'Prince Charming' diary entry. One pupil stated with enthusiasm, 'My writing has become much more interesting'. There is now no significant difference between the standard of writing between boys and girls.

The outstanding quality of teaching is a major factor in the school's success. Teachers and support staff work together extremely well to provide pupils with a high level of challenge and support. Pupils make rapid progress because the academic guidance they receive is exceptional. The school has in place rigorous systems to regularly monitor the progress of all children and identify early any pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able. Teachers use this information effectively to track the performance of pupils, plan lessons that meet individual needs and ask questions that challenge pupils' thinking. As a result, the achievement of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities equals that of their peers. Teachers' marking recognises progress towards challenging learning targets and provides pupils with the guidance they need to improve further.

The excellent curriculum provides pupils with abundant opportunities to develop and extend their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. The curriculum captures the imagination of pupils and maintains their interest because staff put great emphasis on learning through active participation, problem-solving and discussion. Strong links with outside agencies, the local community and a school in China enrich the curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment. The school has recently introduced Mandarin, and pupils have responded to this with enthusiasm.

The pupils feel safe and well looked after because of the outstanding level of care and support they receive. The school follows national guidelines for keeping pupils safe and completing health and safety records. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep really safe and live a very healthy lifestyle. Attendance is good. Behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are respectful towards each other and the adults they work with. They have extremely positive attitudes towards learning and are very keen to talk about their work. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school and they are keen to make a valuable contribution to the local and wider community. The school council has organised fundraising events and the Christmas party. They also suggested purchasing additional bird tables and playground equipment. The high level of basic skills that pupils achieve prepares them exceptionally well for their future education. Events such as the 'restaurant day' give pupils an excellent insight into the world of work. Pupils take on the role of chef, manager, waiter and cashier and open up the restaurant for parents and carers.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational and determined leadership. She encourages staff to develop new and imaginative ways of working with the pupils while maintaining a focus on raising standards and accelerating rates of progress. The deputy headteacher, senior teachers, teachers and support staff provide exceptional support and share her high expectations and commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are rigorous. The headteacher and senior staff provide colleagues with clear guidance about their practice. This leads to continual improvement and extremely positive outcomes for the pupils. Governors provide good support. They are keen and enthusiastic and have recently undertaken a self-evaluation of their work. They have correctly identified the need to increase their involvement in evaluating the work of the school. The school has a crystal clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement, although its view of itself is rather modest because it is constantly striving for excellence. This, coupled with Woodlands Infants' many strengths, provides the school with a superb capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

A well-structured induction programme means children, including those who begin in the Reception class without nursery experience, settle in very quickly. The Foundation Stage team give children an outstanding start to their life in school because staff place a strong emphasis on the children's personal and social development. As one parent wrote, 'We have been extremely pleased with the school. The Nursery staff have been excellent at providing a happy, secure environment.' The Foundation Stage is very well organised and provides children with an interesting range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. Children make exceptional progress in all areas of learning because staff monitor their performance carefully and plan activities that fully meet the needs of each individual. Staff successfully extend children's knowledge and understanding. For example, during the inspection, Nursery staff successfully worked with the children to help them explain why ice melts and describe the difference between a solid and a liquid. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is excellent. As a result, children achieve very well and become independent and enthusiastic learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has no significant areas for improvement. The school development plan clearly identifies what it needs to do to maintain its strengths and to improve further. In addition,
- governors should further increase their involvement in evaluating the work of the school.

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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Woodlands Infant School, Solihull B90 2PX

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and talking to you about your work. I would also like to say a special thank-you to members of the school council who came to talk to me. When I visited your lessons, I was impressed by the good work that you were doing and how much you were enjoying learning new things.

I am delighted to tell you that your school provides you with an outstanding education. This is because Mrs Cannings, the teachers and the other adults that work with you help you to reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics and take excellent care of you.

There are many fantastic things about your school.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you enjoy learning. This helps your teachers to teach you in interesting and exciting ways.
- Mrs Cannings and other staff carefully check that you are learning as much as you can. You get extra help if you need it.
- You are very friendly and polite to each other and the adults that work with you.
- The teachers make lessons fun and give you the chance to talk about your ideas. You told me that this help you improve your writing. I heard how excited Year 1 children were when they received a letter from William!

The adults in your school have good ideas to make sure your school continues to improve. I agree with their ideas. I have also asked the governors to continue working with the school to check that everything is always as good as it can be. You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and doing your best.

I will take away lots of good memories about your school. Thank you once again to all the adults that work with you, the governors and you for making me feel so welcome. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B



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Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector