

Woodthorne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104354
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	308579
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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	393
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Talbot
Headteacher	Richard Bray
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Woodthorne Road South Tettenhall Wolverhampton WV6 8XL
Telephone number	01902 558544
Fax number	01902 558548

Age group	3–11
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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

Woodthorne Primary School is a larger than average, very popular school which, as well as drawing from the immediate area, attracts a significant proportion of its pupils from a wider area. The pupils come from a wide mix of different cultural backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is very high and has gradually increased over the last few years. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion who are eligible for free school meals. Overall, children's attainment when they begin school is in line with what is expected for their age. The school has breakfast and after school clubs and provides a holiday scheme through each of the holiday periods; these are all well attended. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School Status and has achieved Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Woodthorne provides a good education for its pupils. It is a happy and welcoming place to be. The school is a harmonious community: staff have created an ethos where relationships are good and where pupils feel safe. The pupils enjoy coming to school, attend well and have good attitudes to learning. They acquire above average skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) to support them in their future lives. Good teaching enables most pupils to achieve well and to reach above average standards. Teachers' management of pupils is effective, with good relationships between staff and pupils making classrooms harmonious and purposeful places. However, there are some notable inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. For example, although teachers assess pupils' learning regularly, they do not always use this information to plan subsequent lessons. As a result, sometimes work is insufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils. There are good examples of teachers giving pupils regular feedback through their marking of pupils' work, providing clear explanations and ideas on how to improve their work, but this is not the case in all classes.

Pupils are confident young people who enjoy being involved in all school activities, such as charity events, and make a good contribution to the wider community. Their social, moral and spiritual development is good and their cultural development is sound. Moral and social development is better because the school has clear ideas about how it wants its pupils to become responsible citizens of the future.

Whilst there are a number of good features in the care, guidance and support provided to pupils, the school's provision is satisfactory overall. Pupils are well cared for. They behave well in all of the school's activities and adopt safe practices. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but support for those who have English as an additional language and for those who are at an early stage of learning English is less effective. As a result, not all staff are aware of how to meet the specific linguistic needs of these pupils, sometimes resulting in their below average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

The school's good leadership and management and its effective response to the issues raised in its previous inspection demonstrate good capacity for continued improvement. The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of how to move the school forward. The curriculum for ICT has been developed significantly in recent years and has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Subject coordinators and phase managers now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have opportunities to monitor pupils' work in all classes on a regular basis so that they can see how subjects are being taught throughout the school and how pupils progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school in the Foundation Stage with skills typical for three-year-olds and make good progress to reach standards that are above expectations for their age when they leave Reception because of the effective teaching they receive. Teachers plan carefully to give the children lively and practical experiences, on which they thrive. Children like to learn, concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks. Adults have high expectations that they will behave, play and learn well, both alongside one another and together. A well conceived area for activities

to take place outside and a secure playground area provide many opportunities for children to express their own ideas. Learning resources are good to promote all areas of learning. However, less attention is paid to providing dual language signs and resources that reflect the broad range of ethnicities within the school. The school's good entry arrangements ensure that the children settle in well and arrive happily and confidently each day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by planning more challenging work for the more able, particularly in lower Key Stage 2.
- Make more effective use of assessment information and marking so that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work.
- Ensure that there are rigorous systems in place to assess and monitor the specific linguistic needs of those pupils who have English as an additional language and for those who are at an early stage of learning English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school builds well on the early success in the Foundation Stage in Years 1 and 2 with pupils attaining above average results in the national assessments for seven- year-olds. As a result, progress is good at Key Stage 1. Further up the school, progress is uneven. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is variable. Progress quickens in Year 6 with pupils reaching above average standards. Nevertheless, whilst they make good progress, the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. More pupils could aspire to higher standards in every year group.

The pupils who have English as an additional language and those who are from British minority ethnic backgrounds make at least satisfactory and often good progress by the time they leave in Year 6. For example, pupils from Indian backgrounds make good progress in mathematics and English, attaining well above average results in the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The programme for pupils' personal development provides a firm foundation and pupils develop a sense of self and what it means to be part of a community. Pupils form close relationships with each other and adults, showing considerable respect for the feelings and values of others. As a result, incidents of unkind behaviour between pupils are rare. Consequently, all pupils feel safe in school and say they have an adult they can turn to if they have problems.

Personal, social, health and physical education (PE) activities make an effective contribution to the pupils' understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about PE and the need for a healthy diet. Many pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils respond maturely to opportunities to take responsibility. The members of the school council take their roles seriously and demonstrate their ability to represent and articulate the views of their peers. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory rather than good because, although the school celebrates the major religious festivals, there are missed opportunities to provide curricular experiences that reflect the breadth of cultures within the school and local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are consistently good. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Good lessons are well structured, have a brisk pace and pupils are given ample opportunities to apply and consolidate learning, resulting in pupils making good progress. Occasionally, teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good when activities do not match the pupils' needs precisely or when teachers spend a little too much time talking, allowing too few opportunities for pupils to learn actively through paired talking, games or practical tasks. Here, teachers' expectations of what the pupils can attain are not high enough. In particular, work for the higher attaining pupils is too easy and the pace of learning is too slow. Teaching assistants are capable, competent and highly valued members of the teaching team. They provide unobtrusive and sensitive support for children who have difficulties with aspects of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced, fulfilling statutory requirements, and it supports pupils' personal development well. It is effectively enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors. Pupils particularly value the residential trips and the many after school clubs.

A shortcoming in the school's curriculum is the over-reliance on commercially published schemes of work that are not sufficiently matched to the pupils' needs. This has a particular impact on writing, where the school misses opportunities to consolidate skills taught in English lessons and to increase the range and extent of pupils' writing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for, including those pupils who are vulnerable and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Child protection, safeguarding and health and safety procedures are secure and clear. Well conceived arrangements prepare pupils effectively for the move to the next stage of their education and contribute positively to the pupils' well-being and learning.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Although there are targets in English and mathematics, they are not often referred to in lessons and pupils are not always sure of them. The parents are supportive of the school and are keen to be more involved in their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are generally good. The regular tracking and recording of the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is good. Throughout the school, assessment is carried out regularly and conscientiously. However, the results are not always used well to guide the planning of subsequent work and to ensure that all the teaching is challenging.

The school improvement plan provides a good basis for future development. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and provide good levels of support, tempered with a well defined degree of challenge through their well focused visits to school. However, in some aspects of school life, monitoring and evaluation by the governors have been less rigorous, for example in assessing the impact of the school's equality scheme and in participating in safer recruitment training. However, the school has suitable plans to include governors in this training.

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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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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	2
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	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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodthorne Primary School, Tettenhall, WV6 8XL

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and friendly towards us during our recent visit to your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you and your teachers about how well you are doing. We thought you would like to know what we have said about your school, which we think is a good school.

You behave well and you are very kind and considerate to each other. In lessons, we think you listen very carefully to what your teachers have to tell you and you always try hard. You really enjoy coming to school and your attendance is good. You have told us you feel safe and secure. We think you know the importance of staying healthy and taking regular exercise because many of you gave us very good reasons and advice on eating healthily.

We think that your teachers look after you well and listen to what you have to say. They work hard to help you learn but we think that you would do better if everyone was given work of the right difficulty. Sometimes, the work is too easy so you do not learn as much as you should. We have also asked your teachers that when they mark your work they give you a clear target to work on so that you know how to get better at what you do.

We have also asked your teachers to think about how they can give better support in lessons to those of you who speak languages as well as English.

Many things are good about your school and you, together with your teachers, can make it even better. Please keep working hard and doing the best you can. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth Her Majesty's Inspector