

Woodcock's Well CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111255
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310544
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Geoff Lawrence

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Doughty
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Massen
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Church Street Mow Cop Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST7 3NQ
Telephone number	01782 512323
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school draws pupils from the wider community. It serves an area of predominantly private housing with a wide range of social and economic circumstances. Eligibility for free school meals is broadly average. All the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school works closely with a private provider which runs the pre-school Nursery class and the before and after school club.' The school holds the Eco Award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is improving its provision under new leadership. Dedicated and enthusiastic staff work well together to ensure that pupils have a good level of care and support. As a result, good relationships are established and the school has created, as many parents comment, 'a family atmosphere' for their children. This contributes greatly to their good personal development and behaviour. Pupils say they enjoy school and they have good attitudes to learning. Pupils understand what constitutes healthy lifestyles and they know how to stay safe. Pastoral care arrangements are good and pupils say that if problems arise they are dealt with promptly. Attendance remains below average but is improving because of effective strategies introduced to address it.

The curriculum is now good due to recent changes in the way subjects are taught. Effective links are beginning to be made between subjects and the school places an appropriate emphasis on mathematics, English and science. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enhance learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Teachers have started to monitor pupils' progress more closely and this is enabling them to set an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils to help them achieve as well as they can. This is a recent development and while there are signs that it is accelerating pupils' progress, it is too early to see the full effect. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well because their individual progress is closely tracked and intervention strategies meet their needs well. Teachers have started to involve pupils more in their own learning and progress. This is at an early stage and many pupils are uncertain about their targets and how to achieve them because the guidance given through marking is inconsistent in helping pupils to achieve their next steps in learning.

Staffing instability in recent years has contributed to teaching and learning not being effective enough. As a result, pupils' achievement diminished. Action taken by the leadership has remedied this, resulting in pupils making up lost ground. This has helped learners reach standards that are broadly average in all subjects by the end of Year 6, although standards in mathematics have declined. An action plan is in place to address this and is having a positive impact already.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some notable strengths. These include the leadership of the headteacher who provides clear direction and gives a sharper focus to school improvement. She has recognised that with many staff taking on new responsibilities for several areas, their leadership skills are underdeveloped. In particular, they do not have a good enough understanding of the links between information gathered from assessments and performance data and what needs to be taught to raise standards.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Taking this into account and also the recent improvements in standards and achievement, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further and gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Although the Reception is part of a class also comprising Year 1 and 2 pupils, it is well led and managed and as such provides a good quality of education for younger children. Due to the small numbers, children's ability varies widely on entry from year to year but recently, their skills and knowledge are in line with those expected for their age. Limited resources are used

well and the curriculum is well planned. This gives children rewarding and enjoyable experiences to develop their skills and become independent learners. For example, children's enthusiasm was evident when they were experimenting and exploring with torches. The configuration of the building, however, limits access to the outdoor area and, as a result, the outdoor curriculum is underdeveloped and this restricts opportunities for learning. The Foundation Stage manager is working closely with the on-site pre-school Nursery to enhance provision further. Good teaching helps children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in language and personal development. This is evident by the confident way that children speak and listen carefully to each other and to adults. Children have been leaving Reception in recent years with skills and knowledge above those expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement at Key Stage 2 in mathematics.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater understanding of performance data and so are better able to raise standards and achievement.
- Involve pupils more fully in their own learning and progress and ensure marking is consistent across the school so that each pupil knows exactly what to do to reach the next level.

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

Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and 2. In the 2006 tests, standards in English were well below average. In 2007, they rose significantly to be in line with the national average, as a result of a specific school focus on literacy. Standards in science dipped after three years continuous improvement, but remain broadly average. Standards in mathematics, although broadly average, have declined. Recently introduced procedures for tracking pupils' progress more accurately, indicate that measures introduced to improve mathematics are having a positive effect and that standards and achievement are improving in all areas. Good individual support and guidance help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most enjoy school, behave well and are kind towards others. Through visits and other social events, pupils learn how to work with others successfully. A good programme for personal and social education and strong links with the local church help pupils develop respect for others and to value differences reflected in the cultures and traditions of communities different to their own. Pupils are aware of the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating, although they do not always put theory into practice in their choice of snacks.

Pupils have an excellent community spirit and take an active role within the local community. For example, they not only raised funds to provide a Christmas lunch for senior citizens in the community, but took part in its preparation and service. Pupils know the dangers of drugs and how to stay safe. Attendance, which is improving due to effective strategies introduced by the leadership, has been adversely affected by recent bouts of illness. With small numbers of pupils

in the school, this has had a disproportionate effect on attendance figures. In light of the overall average standards achieved in their basic skills, pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Staff quickly establish very good relationships with pupils. This means that lessons are conducted in a very positive atmosphere and pupils are eager to learn. Teachers make a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development and to their ability to work well together. They generally prepare for and manage lessons well, although introductions to lessons are sometimes too long and the pace of learning slows. This hinders pupils' achievement. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed to support those with learning difficulties helping them to make good progress in relation to their specific targets. New arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, coupled with more rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance, have enabled teachers to set work that is challenging for all pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy practical tasks and 'learning through doing.' The effective use of interactive whiteboards helps pupils understand new information more visually.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good due to recent developments. The school is in the process of developing a curriculum that links subjects so that it is more interesting and easier for pupils to follow. For example, in one English lesson the teacher used the 'water cycle' to teach pupils how to write a clear explanation. A focus on writing in 2007 has helped to raise standards and there is currently a strong emphasis on mental calculations to raise achievement in mathematics. Changes to the way English and mathematics are taught are now addressing the needs of all pupils but it is too early to see their full impact.

Many effective programmes help lower attaining pupils make good progress. A good personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' personal development well. Good links with the community provide pupils with experiences of life in the wider world. For example, the school makes good use of its links with the local museum which uses the school's Second World War air raid shelters to deliver 'An Evacuee's Experience' to the pupils. This is used by other schools and gives the pupils, from this small village school, the opportunity to mix with children from other areas. Many additional activities, including trips and sports clubs, enrich learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All procedures for child protection, the safe recruitment of staff and other adults, as well as health, safety and risk assessments, are in place. Links with outside agencies to support work with vulnerable children and their families are good. Strong links with parents promote children's well-being and their education effectively and include regular courses for parents. Starting at school is made easier through a successful relationship with the on-site private pre-school Nursery class. There is a popular breakfast club that helps pupils to be punctual to school.

Procedures to track pupils' progress are now effective in promoting achievement. Pupils have some understanding of their targets and are beginning to be involved in assessing their own work but there is still some way to go for pupils to understand what they have to do to reach these targets. This is partly because the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always help them to understand how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been the driving force behind recent improvements and has already made a significant impact on the accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses. As a result, school strategic planning shows a sound grasp of the issues that still need to be tackled to realise further improvements. She provides a good role model and has engendered enthusiasm and commitment amongst the staff. The headteacher has a well defined focus on raising standards but, she has not lost sight of the importance of pupils' personal development, which lies at the heart of this friendly and welcoming village school.

Robust systems have recently been put in place to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Other leaders, however, are not yet fully effective in interpreting the full range of information available to devise strategies that will raise standards and achievement further.

Good relationships with local organisations and agencies contribute well to improving provision. For example, the involvement with a major retailer resulted in extensive improvements to the school grounds to enhance outdoor learning opportunities.

Many governors are new, but very knowledgeable leadership has enabled them to discharge their duties effectively.

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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?	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	3

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	1
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?	2
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

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

Inspection of Woodcock's Well Church of England Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 3NQ

Thank you for making me welcome during the recent inspection. I really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you work. I was impressed by your good behaviour and how well you worked together. I was made to feel extremely welcome. I enjoyed my meeting with the school council and finding out about the things you liked in school. Yours is a satisfactory but improving school and these are some of the things that I judged to be strengths in your school.

- Adults in school make sure that you are safe, well cared for and happy when you come to school.
- You get on well together and with your teachers.
- There are interesting things for you to do.
- You understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.

There are many other good things about your school, but there are some things it could do to make it even better, and you can help by working hard. I have asked your teachers to help all of you to learn more and reach higher standards in your work, particularly in mathematics. I would like them to make better use of all the information the school has about you. This will enable teachers to plan work for you that will help you to get good results. I have also asked your teachers to help you to be more involved in your own learning so that you know what to do to improve and how to reach your targets. To help you with this, I have asked the teachers to make comments in your books that will tell you clearly what you have to do to improve. You can help by continuing to try hard in lessons and by asking teachers about your learning targets.

Thank you once again for helping me. I enjoyed my time with you and your teachers. I hope you that you continue to work hard and enjoy school.