

Woodfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113299
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	311195
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Lazar
Headteacher	George Muirhead
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Taunton Avenue Whitleigh Plymouth PL5 4HW
Telephone number	01752 706384
Fax number	01752 770950

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school situated on the northern edge of Plymouth. Pupils come into the school with skills and abilities that are well below the level expected. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, as are the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. Nearly all pupils are White British. The school has a Sure Start nursery on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school where pupils achieve well as a result of effective teaching. Parents recognise the school's success. A typical remark from a parent included, 'I feel the school is continually improving due to good teaching staff and support staff.' Pupils' personal development is fostered well so they develop caring attitudes and positive relationships with others. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good. Children say they feel safe and secure in the school and report that misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. A small minority of pupils present behavioural problems but the school does all that it can to create a positive and calm environment for all pupils, and to support those whose behaviour causes a problem. The school provides outstanding support, care and guidance. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that pupils enjoy school. They particularly like the wide range of additional activities provided that add greatly to their life experiences.

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. The headteacher is highly committed to providing the very best possible education for the pupils and he is strongly supported by all staff. Leaders have a very secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are taking well-judged steps to promote improvement. Consequently, there is an upward trend in pupils' standards and achievement. While standards are below average in Year 2, they reflect pupils' good progress from starting points that are generally well below those expected on entry to the school. Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2, and overall standards are broadly average in Year 6. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are well above average and those in English and science are average. Weakness in speaking, listening and writing skills remain a barrier to pupils' progress. Whilst the curriculum provides some good opportunities for pupils to develop these skills, these are not planned systematically enough. Despite this, the school met challenging targets in English and exceeded these in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective additional support they receive.

Teaching is consistently good. The main strengths in teaching are the sensitive and effective way in which pupils are managed, planning which provides a good range of lively and interesting experiences for the pupils, and the contribution made by the teaching assistants. The process of setting targets is very well established and pupils talk confidently about areas that they need to improve or what they are trying to achieve. This is because teachers refer to targets with pupils on a regular basis and marking consistently identifies next steps for learning. In addition, pupils benefit from a good curriculum that provides them with a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities.

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and there is a common sense of purpose shared by the conscientious staff. Leaders are tenacious and are prepared to be innovative to find ways of improving provision. As a result, they have a highly beneficial impact on the quality of education provided. Senior staff, subject leaders and governors all fulfil their roles well. Consequently, standards have improved over the last three years and progress is strengthening. The school is very well placed to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in Reception because teaching and the curriculum are adapted well to meet their needs. Children are happy and are quickly growing in confidence in class. Children's personal, social and emotional development is fostered well, and there are good opportunities for them to make their own choices about learning. The Foundation Stage is well led, and the teacher and teaching assistants work very effectively together to promote good behaviour and learning. Procedures to assess children's progress are rigorous and effective. Good links with the on-site nursery help children to transfer happily to the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills are developed more effectively through work across the curriculum, in order to raise standards in English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are average. On entry to the school, children's standards are often particularly low in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. Despite their good progress in Reception, a significant minority of children do not reach the expected learning goals at the end of the Foundation Stage, and few pupils exceed these goals.

Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 but overall standards are below average in Year 2, largely because of weaknesses in reading and writing. This was reflected in the national tests in 2007, when standards in reading and writing were below average and those in mathematics broadly average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. As a result, standards improve to be average in English and science, but well above average in mathematics. The reason for this difference is because pupils' weaker speaking and writing skills, and limited vocabulary, are barriers to their learning.

Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their individual learning targets. These pupils often benefit from high quality support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are welcoming and polite, and enjoy school. In lessons, most pupils respond quickly when asked to listen to the teacher and work together well in groups. A small number of pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration. At break times, most pupils play together amicably. However, there is a small minority who 'fall out' with each other and this causes a few pupils some distress. Staff are very aware of this and have good procedures in place to deal with it when it occurs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are caring and know the difference between right and wrong. They happily take responsibility for helping to make the school run smoothly. For example, they are responsible for playground equipment and for running the healthy food shop. Older pupils take on responsibilities to look out for the younger ones through the prefect system, and members of the school council fulfil their roles well.

Pupils enjoy physical activity and know that exercise benefits their health. They have a very good awareness of the importance of healthy eating and the value of regular drinks of water. They are concerned for the welfare of others and are safety conscious. Pupils have a strong social and community awareness, and are fundraisers for a range of charities. Their good academic progress and gains in personal development ensure they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching is one of the key reasons for the school's success. Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils very well. They adapt lessons to the needs of the pupils and use a wide range of strategies to capture the pupils' interest and imagination. Consequently, the large majority of pupils settle quickly, focus well on their work and enjoy learning. Teachers use questioning well to provide opportunities for pupils to explain what they think, and this is helping pupils to develop their vocabulary. In some lessons, teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills by encouraging pairs of pupils to share their ideas. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' speaking and listening in work across the curriculum. Planning is good and ensures that the range of different needs of the pupils is met. Teaching assistants provide very strong support through their work with individual and groups of pupils, particularly those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are patient and confident in the work that they do, showing good subject knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum serves the needs of different pupils well. Curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is quickly adapted to the needs of the children and builds on knowledge gathered through strong links with the on-site nursery. Changes in the way letters and sounds are taught through the curriculum have led to improved standards in reading. The curriculum is adapted well for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and there is an innovative programme in place for those pupils who are particularly talented. Art and music feature strongly, and there are displays of good quality artwork throughout the school. There are some good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills but these are not always planned systematically to address these areas of weakness.

There are excellent opportunities for pupils to be involved in clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. Sport features strongly, but there is a wide range of other opportunities, including team-building activities, to promote pupils' social skills. The pupils greatly enjoy these and also talk enthusiastically about educational visits that bring learning to life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care is outstanding and staff know individual children very well. There is a high level of commitment of staff to the welfare of all pupils. Pupils are confident that they can confide in adults in the school, and playtimes are supervised well to ensure that the pupils remain safe and secure. The parent liaison officer provides a very valuable and effective link

between parents and the school. Child protection procedures are securely in place and the school has successfully improved levels of attendance.

Support and guidance for pupils' personal development is good, and is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour. Pupils also benefit from effective support and guidance for their academic work. The school is very careful to track the progress of individual pupils and provide them with extra help and support if they fall behind. Excellent use of external agencies ensures that specialist support and help are available.

Learners are very clear about how to improve their work and regularly use targets to judge for themselves how well they are doing. In Year 3, for example, pupils are reminded about their targets for writing that they then use to help them with their work. In ICT, pupils have targets on hand which are written clearly, so that they can judge for themselves how well they are doing. Marking consistently identifies the next steps in learning and promotes improvement strongly. For example, in Year 2, targets for improvement were clearly identified by the teacher and the next piece of the pupil's writing showed these areas being addressed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is strongly focused on a process of continual improvement. Self-evaluation is both accurate and thorough. Leaders clearly identify the effectiveness of changes made because they track pupils' progress in the school rigorously. For example, the beneficial impact of recent changes to improve reading have been clearly shown through the school's monitoring procedures. Even in mathematics, where standards are above average, leaders analyse results very carefully to identify where improvements can be made. The headteacher delegates wisely, and senior staff know they have the responsibility and opportunity to make a difference in this school. This benefits their motivation and effectiveness. Governors strongly support the school and are prepared to challenge leaders. Target setting is very well established in the school and teachers use information provided to improve provision. Leaders have done much to give pupils ownership of their environment in the school through the displays, murals and refurbishment of the toilet areas. The school makes full use of a range of external services to support them in their work

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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?	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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	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?	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	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils Inspection of Woodfield Primary School, Plymouth, PL5 4HW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. Your school gives you a good education and provides you with outstanding care, support and guidance. Overall, you are making good progress because of the good teaching and curriculum you receive. The headteacher makes sure the school is very well led and managed.

What we most liked about your school:

- The headteacher and staff work very hard to do the best they can for you.
- You make a good start in Reception.
- The teaching you receive is consistently good.
- There are good links with your parents or carers.
- The school ensures that you are safe and secure.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- The after-school clubs and visits to different places help you greatly to learn and develop your skills.
- The curriculum offers you a wide range of exciting and interesting activities.
- You are very clear about what you need to do to improve your work.

We have asked your headteacher and others to:

- Help you to improve your speaking, listening and writing skills.

We are sure that, with your hard work and help, your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector

15 November 2007



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Lead Inspector