

Woodside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115519
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311960
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	4
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Morris Bent
Headteacher	Ian Fergus
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Denehurst Ruardean Woodside Ruardean GL17 9XP
Telephone number	01594 542287
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The small rural school has an entirely White British intake. The numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals or requiring support for some form of learning difficulty are broadly average. Year groups vary in size but are frequently small. The school has a single-aged Early Years Foundation Stage class for the first time in some years. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very varied and is currently slightly below average, with a particular weakness in language skills for some children. Job share arrangements are in place for all three mixed-age classes, and Year 3 and 4 have separate teachers in the morning. The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The pre-school provision on the same site is managed by a committee, and a separate report is available on this.

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 school that has improved substantially since the last inspection due to the strong leadership and vision of the headteacher. The curriculum has been adapted and it is extended well through practical activities, special events and after-class activities. Stimulating topics have been introduced to help pupils improve their writing. As a result, pupils enjoy school and are proud of it, seeing it as a strong centre for the whole community. Pupils are fully involved in many local events and often elect to share money raised for charity with a school in Kenya. The pupils learn and understand a good deal about the global community. They make good progress in their personal development, and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work hard and achieve well in Years 1 to 6, reaching standards that are above average. Parents strongly support the school; the large majority of parents speak highly of the school's work and feel that staff are caring.

Teaching is good. Teachers' increased expectations have had a strong impact on raising standards. Lessons are well planned, have a clear purpose and cater appropriately for both age groups in the mixed-age classes. Good teamwork between teachers and other adults usually ensures that pupils of all abilities are helped to do their best, although less experienced teachers are still perfecting the art of adapting instructions and questioning for the wide spread of ability in their classes. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. High priority is given to pupils' well-being so they are encouraged to be fit and healthy and to feel safe. They are well cared for and thoroughly enjoy their learning. The classrooms have a pleasant 'buzz' as pupils actively explore ideas. In this school, both boys and girls reach better standards than their peers nationally. However, some boys still slightly lag behind the girls in their confidence in articulating ideas in front of the whole class. The support given to pupils with learning difficulties is good as it is sensitively tailored to the needs of individuals.

Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well into the life of the whole school and make steady progress, but assessment of their progress lacks the detail necessary to ensure that planning builds fully on their developing interests. In Years 1 to 6, the school has effective ways of assessing pupils' needs, tracking their progress and setting targets for their next steps in English and mathematics. This detailed monitoring has had a good impact, most notably on improving standards in writing and in increasing the number of pupils who reach higher levels in this subject.

The school is led and managed well. There has been some turnover of teaching staff recently but this has been dealt with effectively with the support of the governors. As an interim measure, the headteacher has been teaching a class three days a week and this has limited the time available for the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, the school evaluates its performance rigorously and accurately so that the targets for improvement are based on a good understanding of needs. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and governors are fully involved in this process and meet all statutory requirements well. Increasingly, management is being devolved so that all staff play a full role in developing the school. Given the strong commitment of staff and governors and the good improvements already made in areas such as writing and information and communication technology (ICT), the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children settle in quickly because of the good support they are given and the regular links with the nursery that the majority attend. They are well cared for and many children move on quickly in their personal, social and emotional development, although a few find school life a bit tough at first; shyness and relatively poor speaking skills are the main issues. Progress is satisfactory across all the areas of learning, supported by clear and effective teaching of basic skills, including early reading. Children have an adequate balance of activities that are directed by adults and those which promote learning through exploration. However, although their own ideas are used in 'show and tell' sessions and in reports about the travels of their class mascot, teaching plans are not yet adapted sufficiently to build on children's developing interests on a day-to-day basis. Observations of children are not capturing this information and enabling staff to build the next steps of learning on what they have seen. Children learn through visits and visitors and they enjoy their off-site visit to a local gym. In their after-school 'yoga bugs', they also extend their physical skills well. As a result of the consistently sound teaching, children reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1, but there are some weaker elements in the end-of-year profiles for past year groups. The observation and assessment processes are not rigorous enough to identify the exact source of any underachievement. The provision is well organised and class level records are in place; overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the outdoor curriculum further; children already enjoy their 'welly walks' and opportunities to explore the lovely local natural environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and use the information gathered to further develop the planning so that children's interests are built on fully.
- Reinstate the formal monitoring of teaching to achieve greater consistency in the quality of lessons, ensuring that teachers' use of questioning is consistently good and that boys are encouraged to speak in whole-class situations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make sound progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and pupils achieve well in Year 1 to Year 6 because of good teaching which helps build effectively on previous learning. The school's systems to assess pupils' progress now quickly identify the very few pupils who are performing at a lower rate than they should be. Pupils then receive the targeted support they need to catch up and make the same good progress as others. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they receive a consistently good level of support across the school. Good support is given by the speech and language service.

Pupils in Years 2 and Year 6 are largely on course to meet the challenging targets set for them in the 2009 national tests. Initiatives to improve achievement in the higher levels in writing have met with some success but have not yet had time to fully overcome the legacy of past underachievement. The school continues to retain a particular strength in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning underpin the high standards they achieve. Attendance is satisfactory; the school has met the local target for improvement, and although it is still below the national average, there are appropriate award schemes and rigorous follow-up procedures in place. Pupils behave responsibly and safely in lessons and around school. They are aware of the school charter and can discuss exactly what is expected of them. They work well together and talk well in small groups, although it is noticeable that some boys are reluctant to take an active part in whole-class discussions. Pupils' economic understanding is developed well, for instance through recent opportunities to raise money for Red Nose day with their cake sale. The benefits of physical exercise and the whole-school 'huff and puff' exercise programme are well understood. Pupils willingly take on duties that involve them in the life of the school, especially those supporting the younger pupils. The school council have been involved in decision-making and are proud of the introduction of the tyre climbing feature they requested on the school field. This further encourages good physical skills. Although pupils know a good deal about the wider world and are regularly involved in the immediate community, they have less opportunities or first-hand experience of working with local Gloucestershire or Bristol multi-ethnic communities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers expect pupils to be actively involved in their learning, and the quality of pupils' work shows application and endeavour. Lesson plans are well adapted to the various ages and ability groups in each class. Pupils' interest is caught and held well through practical activities and stimulating resources, as seen in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on volume; this had everyone debating what the results of the experiments with containers and coloured water would be. Lessons are reasonably brisk and in the best examples, teachers use questioning skilfully to prompt thoughtful answers, although this is not always the case. Most of the work set for groups of differing abilities is challenging and teachers and assistants work well as a team to help all to do their best. Marking is used effectively to ensure work is covered but some lacks guidance as regards the next steps the pupil needs to take to improve. A visiting specialist teaches French to Years 3 and 4 and a good range of tuition is available for music for older pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school, in large part because they are provided with a curriculum that meets their needs and interests well. Pupils say they particularly like the fact that ICT has improved and they enjoy using it for literacy in their 'Big Write' sessions. The school is aware that the next stage is to provide even more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their extended writing skills, if more are to consistently reach the higher levels in writing. Those pupils spoken to talked enthusiastically about the range of interesting visits and visitors to school that increase their enjoyment of learning and build up their knowledge of the world outside their rural locality. The new International Primary Curriculum is extending both the teachers' and pupils' range of interest. Improved planning and provision for personal,

social and health education and religious education ensure that pupils are well aware of the use and dangers of drugs and of the diversity of faiths in the country. A reasonable range of extra-curricular activities and beneficial links with the local community and other schools ensure that pupils have good opportunities to mix with a wider group of peers. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is well targeted so it helps these pupils make the same good progress as others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A warm ethos and a pleasant, caring environment within the school contribute effectively to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their sense of well-being. Parents value the care their children receive and the pupils said that they feel safe and well looked after. They say that any minor bullying that arises is effectively dealt with by staff and that all adults would help them if asked. They would welcome a confidential 'worry box' so any child could alert staff if they were too embarrassed to approach anyone directly for help; the school council agreed to look into this. Transfer arrangements are well established to support those moving on to the next stage of schooling. Those with learning difficulties receive extra support to make the transition. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and all safeguarding measures are conscientiously conducted. The school has good procedures to track pupils' progress and individual targets for improvement are in place. When interviewed, older pupils understood these well but younger pupils were not all sure what they need to do to reach theirs. As yet, the school does not fully involve pupils in deciding when their targets have been met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked successfully to ensure the school has developed a more rigorous view of its strengths and weaknesses. This has helped the school to build successfully on its strengths while adjusting and adapting to recent requirements and the need to raise standards. The provision for ICT has been brought up to date and the adapted curriculum has led to improved standards. Governors play an active role in school life. They are increasingly aware of the need to challenge the school so that it continues to keep up and move forward. They are wisely restructuring so they will be in a better position to help evaluate the new curriculum in due course. The school works closely with parents. However, a minority of parents do not feel entirely welcome due, it seems, to the new security fence and office arrangements, and just a few feel that arrangements to speak to class teachers could be improved further. Good links with external agencies such as the newly appointed family support worker support pupils' learning well. The accommodation is tight but it has been imaginatively adapted, for example through the recent provision of a covered area for outdoor play for the youngest pupils.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

20 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodside Primary School, Ruardean GL17 9XP

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed me to your school for the recent inspection. It was good to speak to you, and you gave me lots of helpful information about the school. Special thanks go to those who showed me their ICT work and those who came to talk to me about their views of the school and their learning. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

Lots of you, your parents and the governors told me how much you enjoy school and that you go to a good school. I agree. Your headteacher and staff work hard to make your school an exciting place to be. I was pleased to see that you work hard in lessons and that you behave well and have good manners. Because of this, you are learning well and your work is of a better standard than when inspectors last visited the school. I am pleased to see how your writing has improved. You and your teachers have worked hard to make this happen. Well done, and please keep it up!

Your headteacher is a good leader and has helped staff make lots of changes to keep the school up to date. Teachers give you work that is almost always at the right level of difficulty and they teach you well. They and the teaching assistants make sure that if you need extra help, you get it. I have asked the team in the Early Years Foundation Stage to look even more carefully at how the young children are learning to see if there is anything that needs more attention, so that if possible more children reach all the early learning goals by the time they go into Year 1. I have also asked your headteacher, now that he has finished teaching in Years 5 and 6, to visit your classes more to be sure that all your teachers ask you really challenging questions that make you think hard and get more involved in discussions, especially the boys.

You look after each other well in your school and are growing up to be sensible and responsible young people. Thank you for the work you do to raise money for other people. I liked the way you cooperated in your lively assembly and the way you are all trying to eat healthy food and to have lots of exercise, especially on the lovely field and your tyre climbing area. It seems as if the school council are doing a good job. I hope the gardening club goes well now that spring is here and that you all continue to work hard in all your lessons.

Best wishes for the future

Mo Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector