

Woodmancote School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115576
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311984
Inspection date	20 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Georgina Gray
Headteacher	Gary Tucker
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	Station Road Woodmancote Cheltenham GL52 9HN
Telephone number	01242 674312
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

Pupils' progress in mathematics and how well teaching meets differing needs in numeracy lessons.

The role of governors.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum.

How well pupils take responsibility.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. 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, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school takes most of its pupils from the local communities of Woodmancote and Bishops Cleeve. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties is below average, as is the number eligible for free school meals. The headteacher took up post in January 2008.

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 where pupils achieve well and flourish socially. As one pupil correctly said, 'At our school, we have great fun and learn a lot.' Adults very successfully support pupils in their good personal development, ensuring that there is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in school. Pupils behave well, are keen to learn and are very polite when talking to visitors. They make an excellent contribution to the community, very happily taking on responsibility by being 'play leaders' or 'buddying' younger pupils. The active school council gives pupils a very valuable opportunity to have their opinions heard. Councillors are very diligent in their work and they make a very good contribution to school development. For example, they raised funds for and selected the 'trim trail' equipment that has significantly enhanced provision at playtimes. Activities such as these and pupils' good progress in developing basic skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Good teaching means that children get a good start in the Reception Year and then maintain this good progress in the rest of the school, with standards rising to well above average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards across the school are slightly lower in mathematics than in English and science. This is because in some numeracy lessons work is not pitched at the right level for all pupils. When this happens, the work is too hard or too easy for some pupils and this slows progress. Nevertheless, there is a good pace to learning in most lessons and teachers work hard to make learning exciting. Teachers get on very well with their pupils and make good use of resources to support learning. They integrate ICT well into different subjects so that pupils get many opportunities to practise and improve their skills. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 show good ICT skills when developing multimedia presentations as part of their topic on 'The Vikings'.

Pupils greatly enjoy school because the good curriculum provides every child with a wide range of purposeful experiences. Pupils especially enjoy the very good use of visits, visitors and clubs to bring subjects alive. Creativity is catered for very imaginatively through music and art activities. Very high quality artwork is displayed around school, much of it completed in well attended art clubs. Pupils are particularly proud of their musical performances and instrument playing and this reflects the significant improvements in music provision since the last inspection. The school's very good efforts to promote positive values are reflected in the pupils' excellent understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. They explain clearly about the value of eating healthy foods and they participate very enthusiastically and successfully in the many sporting activities provided by the school and visiting coaches. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay safe both in and out of school through visits from the emergency services and the 'Life Education Centre'.

Pupils are well cared for and are given generally good academic support. As one pupil noted, 'Whenever we have a worry there is someone there to help us.' Pupils with learning difficulties are identified quickly, enabling them to make good progress, especially in improving basic literacy skills. Teachers use marking and targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work, although this practice is not yet consistently good across all subjects.

Good leadership and management have helped the school to continue to improve since the last inspection. The new headteacher is setting a clear direction for school development and he is supported well by other senior managers. Together, they have an accurate picture of overall school effectiveness. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school and subject

leaders are hard-working and enthusiastic. However, they do not have enough opportunity to check on the quality of teaching and learning for themselves so that they can get a clearer picture of what is going well and what needs improving. There are many new governors and they are already taking the right steps to strengthen their role in holding the school to account and strategic planning. The school sets itself challenging targets for development and it is well placed to realise its aspirations for further improvement.

Members of staff have forged a strong partnership with parents and with other local schools. Parents make a significant contribution to the school's work by supporting their children's learning at home, especially in reading, and by raising funds to improve resources and accommodation. For example, pupils are benefiting from a recently developed cooking area that is helping them to put into practice their learning on healthy diets. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting that, 'Most important is the fact that my children are very happy at school and they are being nurtured to become responsible citizens as well as to achieve their academic potential.' This comment accurately captures the essence of this successful school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'My daughter has had a super introduction to school life. She loves going to school, is very stimulated and we are very pleased with her teachers.' These comments from a parent are typical of the very positive view that parents have of the Reception Year. Children start school with skills and capabilities similar to those found nationally and they make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, standards are above average by the start of Year 1. Teachers and teaching assistants have good expectations of what the children should learn and expect them to do their best at all times. This means that there is a purposeful buzz in lessons as children go happily about their work. Children are given good support, especially when working with an adult. Children show good independence when choosing where to work, although there are occasional missed opportunities to extend learning at these times. The good curriculum includes extensive use of the fairly small but well resourced outdoor area to support learning. Provision is well managed and members of staff work together closely to assess children's learning and to check that all are doing well enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers always pitch work at the right level for all pupils in numeracy lessons.
- Give subject leaders more opportunities to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

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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	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	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?	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Woodmancote School, Woodmancote GL52 9HN

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for showing me your work. You are very polite and friendly and well behaved. I enjoyed talking to the school council who are doing a super job in helping the school to improve. I agree with them that your school is good and that it does a lot to help you.

- Some of the things I found out about your school.
- Good teaching helps you to learn well and to make good progress; at the moment, you do slightly better in English and science than in mathematics.
- You are very happy at school and thoroughly enjoy it because adults make learning fun; they plan many interesting activities and let you take part in a great number of clubs and visits.
- You produce some superb artwork and your singing sounds great; I hope the Years 3 and 4 performances went well.
- You have an outstanding understanding of how to stay healthy and do especially well in sporting competitions.
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they give you good help with your work.
- Your headteacher and other senior managers are leading the school well and are working hard to make it even better.
- Most of your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.
- What I have asked your school to do now.
- Make sure that the work that you get in numeracy lessons is not too easy or too hard for any of you.
- Give teachers who are in charge of different subjects more time to check how well you are being taught so that they can find out what to do next to improve your work.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. I wish you all the best for the future. Many thanks to Year 5 for the bread rolls you baked for me. I ate most of them on the way home!

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper Lead inspector

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