

Woodcote Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120096 |
| Local Authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 313514 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 May 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Pat Walsh HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 125 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Tom Elliot |
| Headteacher | Ian Watson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 March 2006 |
| School address | Willowbrook Close Ashby-de-la-Zouch LE65 1JX |
| Telephone number | 01530 417007 |
| Fax number | 01530 412712 |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a small primary school situated in a socially mixed urban area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and the proportion who need additional support or who find learning difficult is broadly average. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Standard and the Sports Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| 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 standards are rising and pupils achieve well. It is a happy community where pupils are well cared for, enjoy their learning, and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of enrichment activities. The headteacher, ably supported by his committed and effective deputy, has been the driving force behind a range of initiatives that have shown a significant impact in a short time. He is building a well-focused team who share his determination to raise standards further and ensure that pupils achieve as well as they are able. As one parent commented, 'Woodcote is a fantastic school and they have come on in leaps and bounds in the past couple of years.' This view was echoed by many parents who are pleased with the high level of care and support provided by staff and the 'happy family atmosphere' in which the children thrive.

Pupils' achievement is good overall. The school has identified writing as a weakness and has successfully begun to tackle underachievement in this area. Early indications are that the measures introduced are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and standards are now satisfactory overall and rising, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The pupils' behaviour, their relationships with one another, and their attitudes to learning are all good. Their good personal development means they have a clear sense of right and wrong and show care and consideration for others. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe. They enjoy being active, take part enthusiastically in the wealth of sports activities, and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyle choices. By Year 6, the pupils are mature and responsible individuals who take their role in school and the need to be responsible citizens very seriously.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall, resulting in good achievement. Teachers are given good guidance about how they can improve their practice through support and feedback, which is helpful and incisive. All staff have embraced the opportunity to become more creative in their approach, particularly in the teaching of writing, and this has resulted in an acceleration of pupils' progress. The teachers know their pupils well and, in the main, lessons are planned so that all pupils build effectively on their previous learning. Although marking gives feedback on strengths, it does not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to move up to the next level in their work. Some accurate and helpful target setting is helping pupils to make good progress but this is not consistent across classes. The good curriculum includes an effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education and is enriched well by visits and visitors to the school. The recent Citizenship Week has provided good opportunities for pupils to work with the school and wider community on joint projects such as recycling, litter collection and gardening. Pupils enjoy the variety of interesting work they are given. Links are developing between subjects but are not yet consistently ensuring that pupils develop or apply their literacy, numeracy and computing skills across a range of other subjects in order to raise standards.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and his dedicated staff have worked strenuously to maintain a focus on raising achievement and standards since the last inspection. The school knows what it must do to improve and there are clear signs that the measures introduced, such as using more exciting approaches to the teaching of writing, are starting to show results.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they achieve well. When children start school, their skills, particularly their language and literacy skills, are below those typical for their age. They settle quickly into the stimulating environment and benefit from the exciting range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. A key strength of the provision is the strong emphasis placed on children learning through enjoyment and first-hand experience by, for instance, investigating the collection of mini-beasts in the school's garden compost and discovering a bird nest complete with chicks. Teaching is good and the strong teamwork contributes very well to the good progress that the children make. The outdoor classroom provides a satisfactory range of learning activities and the school plans to develop the range of play equipment and learning activities. By the time children enter Year 1, the majority have made good progress in most areas of learning, but some have not achieved all the early learning goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and further improve achievement in writing.
- Provide more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to link learning across a range of subjects and apply their literacy, numeracy and computing skills across subjects.
- Use marking and target setting more consistently to make clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and, overall, standards have risen since the last inspection and are now average. The greatest improvement is in Key Stage 2, where results of the national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2007 were broadly average. Tracking data shows standards in all three subjects are set to rise further in 2008. Pupils' achievement in writing in all year groups has been variable. However, the impact of recently introduced strategies to improve writing is now starting to show. There has been a good focus on developing the pupils' writing through a range of topics that appeal to the interests of boys and girls. As a result, pupils' work and the school's assessment data show that more are now working at the expected levels for their age in Key Stage 2 and their progress is good. In recent years, the standards achieved in Year 2 have been too low. However, teachers' assessments indicate standards are now rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who find learning more difficult make similar progress to their peers because the support they receive is well matched to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are confident learners and enjoy coming to school. This is confirmed by many parental comments such as 'My child loves every day at school and he enjoys the extras that help him learn.' Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and they say that they feel safe and secure. They know whom to turn to if they have a problem, and they say that any bullying and bad behaviour is extremely rare and quickly dealt with. Older pupils act as play coaches to ensure that playtimes are harmonious and fun. The school council members take their

responsibilities very seriously and are proud of their recent work towards the provision of healthier and more enjoyable school dinners. Pupils' understanding of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, and is fostered well through assemblies and the good cross-curricular provision of personal, health and social education. Pupils' good progress in basic skills, including the use of information and communication technology together with well-developed social skills, prepares them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning result in most pupils making good progress. Behaviour is managed very well and strong relationships amongst pupils and staff contribute to pupils' confidence and progress. Lessons are generally lively and interesting with good levels of challenge. A genuine enthusiasm for learning is evident and the use of interactive whiteboards successfully adds interest to lessons. The variety of approaches to learning adopted in many lessons is good, with teachers and teaching assistants making good use of practical activities to make learning enjoyable. When this happens, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils make good progress. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher used the school environment very effectively to involve the pupils in working out accurately how much turf was needed for an irregular outside area. In a minority of lessons, the pupils spend too much time sitting and listening and are not fully engaged in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and there is a well-planned programme of work that includes good provision for pupils' personal development. A strong focus on the further development of literacy and numeracy is showing promising results. However, pupils' writing remains an area of weakness that is being successfully addressed by the school. There are excellent levels of enrichment and pupils take part in a wide range of clubs and activities outside lessons. Their enjoyment of learning is fostered by learning to speak French, working towards the Eco schools award, and the integrated approach to citizenship and improving the local environment. The school is in the early stages of developing a more creative and cohesive plan for the curriculum in order to further raise standards and improve achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is a major strength of the school. Positive relationships combined with a caring approach ensure that each child feels safe and ready to learn. Links with parents are strong and established at an early stage. Procedures for health and safety, risk assessment and child protection are robust. Academic guidance is good. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress enables the school to pinpoint any underachievement and take effective action with additional support in class and in small groups. Staff are starting to involve pupils more effectively in their own learning by setting targets to show the next steps in learning. However, there is insufficient use made of targets in lessons, and many pupils are not clear what they need to do to improve particular pieces of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has united staff and governors around a clear vision and strategic direction. Together, they are successfully tackling the challenge of raising standards further. Self-evaluation is accurate because senior leaders have established rigorous systems to check that planned actions have an impact on pupils' learning. Curriculum coordinators play an active role in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subject areas and contribute well towards the strategic priorities for improvement. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and provide good support. They demonstrate a good level of commitment to the school's work through their regular visits to school and, in their role as critical partners, they provide good support and challenge to the headteacher and his staff. Recent improvements in pupils' standards and their better achievement demonstrate that the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 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

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| 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

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodcote Primary School, Ashby-de-la-Zouch LE65 1JX

Thank you for welcoming me to your school, talking to me so politely and showing me your work. I really enjoyed the time I spent with you. You told me you enjoy school, particularly working with your friends and taking part in all the clubs and activities. I was particularly impressed by all the work you do to protect the environment and to tidy up the local area. I hope the hanging baskets you have planted look wonderful when the flowers bloom. I was pleased to see how well you behave and how sensibly you treat one another. You know a lot about staying fit, enjoying sport and keeping healthy.

You go to a good school. All the staff work hard to help you learn as much as you can. You told me that you enjoy writing when the topics are interesting and, although your writing has improved, it can get even better. I have asked your headteacher and the teachers to help you to improve your writing skills. I have also asked the school to look at ways to make the curriculum more interesting and give you work that links different subjects together. I have asked your teachers to improve your work by using their marking to let you know what the next steps are in your learning, and to link this with your targets.

I am sure you will help by continuing to work hard and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

22 May 2008

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I am sure you will help by continuing to work hard and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Pat Walsh
Her Majesty's Inspector