

Woodfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123390
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314586
Inspection date	14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Callow

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Davis
Headteacher	Sue Young
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2003
School address	Woodfield Road Cophorne Shrewsbury SY3 8LU
Telephone number	01743 343812
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Age group	4-7
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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: the extent to which teachers and leaders ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can; the impact of a creative approach to the curriculum on pupils' achievement; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from: discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chair of governors, parents and pupils; lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work; analysis of assessment data; a review of the school's monitoring and evaluation records. 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

Children come from a large number of different pre-school settings to join the Foundation Stage of the school. Their skills on entry vary considerably, but overall they are above those expected for their age. Whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average, the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. The long-standing headteacher is retiring at the end of this term. The governors have appointed a new headteacher to start in January 2008, but are awaiting her arrival before appointing a permanent deputy headteacher and another member of the senior leadership team.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

At the time of its last inspection, Woodfield was judged to be a very effective school with some excellent features. As a result of the high quality of the school's self-evaluation, the strong leadership of the headteacher and the hard work and commitment of all of the staff team, it is now outstanding.

Pupils' friendliness, confidence and excellent behaviour are immediately apparent. On talking to them, it is clear how much impact the values and attitudes promoted by the school's work on Education for Sustainable Development is having on their outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are very sensitive to each other's needs, particularly those who are most vulnerable. They cooperate well both at play and in their work. Their understanding of ecological issues and how they may impact their future lives is highly developed for pupils so young. They are keen to say how happy and safe they feel at school and what contributes to this. As one child said, 'We have friends, adults look after us and there are fences and gates'.

The Eco-Schools committee of pupils actively leads the work on Education for Sustainable Development. They make a major contribution to what the school does on recycling, improving the school grounds, better ways of travelling to school and healthy living. Through the committee, pupils learn about the principles of democracy as well as taking responsibility. For example, they conduct themselves well at meetings, listening carefully to the views of others and ensure that playtimes run smoothly and happily. All pupils have a very thorough understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and say how important fruit, vegetables and drinking water are in this. One child said, 'You should walk to school because if you come by car, it makes fumes and pollutes the atmosphere. If you walk, it is good exercise'.

The work on ESD plays a significant part in making the curriculum outstanding, but other factors are equally important. Literacy and numeracy skills are strongly promoted, so that pupils reach very high standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 2. The use of information and communication technology in both teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection, with better resources and careful planning by teachers.

Noteworthy, however, is the creative approach to the curriculum, where learning starts, wherever possible, with practical first-hand experiences. Visits and visitors inspire pupils to want to find out more, to enjoy their learning and to reach high standards in different subjects. This is particularly evident in areas such as art and design technology where, for example, recent visits to a Lowry exhibition and Shrewsbury Castle have produced some stunning work. Excellent links are made between different subjects, as is evident from a recent visit of a man who cares for hedgehogs. This not only taught pupils about the lives and habits of these creatures but also provided a stimulus for collages and poems. Every opportunity is used to develop pupils' writing, as in this case, which is a major contribution to standards in this subject being exceptionally high.

Teachers' planning exploits these different curriculum opportunities very effectively and builds well on pupils' prior learning. This means that not only are tasks interesting, but they are pitched at the right level for pupils' differing abilities. Consequently, the vast majority, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able, make excellent progress. Teachers are particularly skilled at explaining things carefully so that pupils learn new concepts quickly and thoroughly. They also make clear at the start of lessons what the expected outcomes are and give good feedback both orally and in writing as to how successful pupils are in reaching

these outcomes. Teaching assistants are used extremely well to support all pupils' learning and especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

All staff demonstrate a high level of care for pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are especially well supported and cared for. Adults know the pupils well and are patient and responsive to individuals' needs. They also have high expectations, which results in pupils rising to challenges set, in terms of both work and behaviour. This is evident in the school's ethos, which one parent correctly described by saying, 'There is a very calm, welcoming atmosphere. The children are very happy, well-organised and work hard'.

Senior leaders carefully monitor the school's performance. Their evaluations are detailed and thorough and there are rigorous systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. This enables them to identify quickly those at risk of underachievement and to put appropriate intervention strategies in place for support. This has been particularly effective in the last year, enabling pupils of lower ability to reach higher standards in their writing. Leaders' detailed analysis of assessment information also highlights comparative areas of weakness in the school's overall performance. For example, at the present time, there is a whole-school focus on improving the handwriting and presentation of pupils' work.

Parents rightly acknowledge that the outstanding leadership of the headteacher has played a major part in ensuring the high quality of education provided by the school. Governors have thought carefully about succession planning and, having appointed a new headteacher, are now ready to appoint others to the senior leadership team. They realise that establishing another strong team will be crucial to the school's continued success and development. Discussions with parents show that many of them feel that they have an excellent partnership with the school, that there is good communication and any concerns are listened to and dealt with effectively. However, a small minority, as judged from responses to the parent questionnaire, do not feel that they have opportunities to express their views and that the school does not always respond to their suggestions and concerns. Nevertheless, parents overwhelmingly have a very positive view of the school, which one parent expressed by saying, 'I would recommend this school to anyone'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The high level of care given to children begins before they join the Foundation Stage, with a good induction programme that parents value highly. Outstanding leadership and very effective teaching ensure that whatever their starting points, children quickly settle, are extremely happy and make excellent progress. Adults work very hard and successfully at developing children's independence, which is often a weakness when children start school. As a result, they are soon able to choose activities and select equipment that will help them to learn. This contributes significantly to children reaching standards that are well above those expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. It also ensures their excellent personal development and well-being. The basic skills in communication, language and literacy are particularly well taught because adults use every opportunity to promote them in all aspects of an exciting curriculum. For example, children's vocabulary was thoughtfully developed by encouraging them to talk about sounds and colours as they explored the leaves outside.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish a new senior leadership team that will maintain and develop the school's current ethos and provision of high quality education.

- Seek ways of ensuring that all parents feel that they have opportunities to express their views of the school and that it responds to their suggestions and concerns.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 Children

Inspection of Woodfield Infant School, Shrewsbury, SY3 8LU

Thank you for being so friendly to me when I visited your school recently. Lots of you were keen to talk to me about your school and why you enjoy it so much. I am sorry that I did not have time to talk to more of you.

You go to an outstanding school, where you are cared for extremely well by all the adults who work there. I also noticed how kind you are to one another. You are developing a really good understanding about how to live healthily and safely, and I was particularly impressed with the skills and knowledge that you gain through the school's work on Education for Sustainable Development. This means that you are very well prepared for when you move on to your next school.

Whatever your ability, each one of you is helped to do as well as you can. Teachers do this by making sure that the work that they plan for you to do is not too easy and not too hard. They also do it by giving you interesting tasks, which are related to visits that you have been on or visitors that have been into school. In addition, you achieve so well because the teachers and the leaders of your school keep such good checks on your progress.

I saw the results of some of your work on display in your classrooms and in corridors and I thought it was brilliant. Your art and design technology work is excellent and I could understand why the Year 1 entry to the West Midlands Show won first prize. To have six moving models in a box using only junk and recycled materials is amazing!

The school will miss your headteacher when she retires, but a new one has been appointed to start next term. I have agreed with your school that what is important now is for it to have another team that will lead it on, so that it is just as good in the future but will develop in new ways. I have also asked your school to make sure that all of your parents are confident that their views about the school are listened to. By doing these things, everyone will feel that they are helping your school to become even better.

With best wishes

Peter Callow Lead inspector

15 November 2007



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Peter Callow
Lead inspector