

Wood Ley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124680
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315015
Inspection dates	14–15 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Winchester
Headteacher	Mrs S Ward
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Lowry Way Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 1UF
Telephone number	01449 616038
Fax number	01449 672261

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of broadly typical size for its type. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. A few pupils receive extra support to help them learn English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although there is an average proportion with statements entitling them to extra support. Most of their needs are based around speech and communication difficulties, or other specific learning difficulties. The school has a stable population and the number of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than normal is well below that typically found.

The school has achieved a wide range of awards including the Quality Mark, Investors in People, Healthy School Status, Activemark and Extended School Status. The school has also developed many partnerships with other organisations and offers before and after school and holiday care.

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. This view is expressed by parents and pupils, and is supported by the evidence of the inspection. It is good because pupils progress well and reach standards that are higher than those found nationally. A number of aspects of the school's work are outstanding and reflect good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development is excellent and the school works hard to ensure they develop into effective learners. Pupils commented on how much they enjoy school. One parent wrote of her son, 'even when ill he is desperate to get back because he loves school so much.'

Children make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. Pupils' progress is good between entry to school and the end of Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in information and communication technology (ICT). By the end of Year 2, standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress through Years 3 and 4 has historically been more inconsistent but the school has worked successfully to improve this aspect. Pupils' present standards in Years 2 and 4 are above those expected. The successful development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills helps prepare pupils well for their future education. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and their excellent attitudes towards learning. This is reflected in their outstanding attendance and excellent behaviour. Pupils have a deep understanding of how to lead healthy lives and to stay safe. They make an excellent contribution to the community and when they have responsibilities these are carried out with real pride and determination.

Teachers have effective relationships with their pupils and they know individuals well. This helps them provide work that is usually well matched to pupils' prior attainment. There are occasions when tasks do not provide the most able pupils with sufficient challenge or enable them to use the skills they have learned to solve problems. The teachers' planning is based on an excellent curriculum that ensures the needs of mixed-age classes are met. The school is a very caring place. This is reflected in the outstanding provision for those pupils who find learning difficult or who have physical difficulties. They are fully included in all aspects of school life, and make excellent progress. Requirements for ensuring pupils' safety are met. Teachers often provide pupils with good advice and support with their learning but the marking of work does not always help them understand what they need to do to improve. Individual targets set are not always meaningful to the pupils and at times they are not sure exactly what is expected of them.

The school is well led and managed. The staff team is strong and the headteacher provides the school with a clear focus on raising standards and providing high levels of care and support. The governing body is effectively structured and governors monitor how well the school is performing. Subject leadership has improved since the last inspection. Target setting is challenging and based on detailed information about how well pupils are doing. The school's self-evaluation is based on detailed evidence, and the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision in the Foundation Stage has been greatly improved by the new accommodation and resources. Staff make excellent use of the available outdoor space to support children's

learning. Teachers work closely together when planning a wide range of exciting and fun activities. This ensures that children have sufficient opportunities to select what they want to do as well as take part in teacher-led activities. Teachers are very well supported by the teaching assistants who have very positive relationships with the children. Children make an outstanding start to their schooling and develop excellent learning habits. Teachers track their progress closely through some excellent assessment activities. This first-rate provision ensures that the children, whose levels of attainment are mostly below those expected when they start school, make outstanding progress and reach standards that are typically above those expected by the end of the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the most able pupils are consistently provided with appropriately challenging work.
- Help pupils understand the relevance of targets set for them and ensure the marking of their work helps them understand what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress between joining the school in Reception and leaving it in Year 4. In Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate the progress they have made in reading, writing and mathematics effectively. The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 are consistently above average and this is confirmed by the annual national assessments. The progress made in Key Stage 2 has not been as strong in recent years, although it has still been satisfactory. It was particularly weak in mathematics in 2007. The school recognised the need to improve pupils' progress generally and put in place a number of changes that have resulted in clear improvements this year. Pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets and standards are above those expected in Year 4. Standards in ICT are also above average as pupils have good opportunities to develop their computer skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is excellent. Pupils enjoy their lessons greatly and are enthusiastic in their work. In the best lessons, there is evidence that pupils are actively encouraged to be independent learners and they work well by themselves. When this happens the level of challenge and interest is high. Pupils know who to turn to when troubled and are confident that adults will deal with any issues that arise. Pupils confirmed, 'bullying is not an issue here'. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of how to stay healthy and know that they need to eat '5 a day' (portions of fresh vegetables and fruit) as well as take regular exercise. Taking part in activities such as Chinese New Year and having visits from the Muslim and Jewish community ensures that pupils have an outstanding awareness and understanding of different cultures. The school council and team captains are very proud of their status and enjoy the range of responsibilities they have. Pupils are engaging, developing excellent interpersonal skills and they are able to express feelings and opinions clearly and succinctly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' learning is good because teachers work very hard to plan and prepare effective and interesting lessons. Teachers have very strong and positive relationships with the pupils and a good understanding of how well they are doing. The teaching has improved since the last inspection. One of the main reasons for this is the much improved use made of technology, especially interactive whiteboards, to provide activities that capture pupils' imaginations. Although teachers are very aware of how well their pupils are doing, and often provide different work for different groups based on their prior learning, they do not consistently provide activities that challenge the most able. Teachers work together well, planning for the mixed age classes and organising a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles. Lessons usually have a good pace and, in the best lessons, teachers use questioning techniques effectively to extend and consolidate pupils' understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils frequently use computers, and this helps to support their learning very well. In addition, recent modifications to the curriculum ensure that the topics studied in lessons link together very well in order to make learning much more meaningful. The introduction of French has further broadened the range of what children learn. The school's very wide-ranging programme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education, results in outstanding achievement in these areas. The provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties, or who need extra help with their learning, is outstanding. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The curriculum has a strong emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils frequently use computers, and this helps to support their learning very well. In addition, recent modifications to the curriculum ensure that the topics studied in lessons link together very well in order to make learning much more meaningful. The introduction of French has further broadened the range of what children learn. The school's very wide-ranging programme for developing pupils' personal, social and health education, results in outstanding achievement in these areas. The provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties, or who need extra help with their learning, is outstanding. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good improvement made since the last inspection is the result of effective leadership by the headteacher and the senior management team. They have a good grasp on what the school does well through a range of monitoring activities. Leaders have an improved understanding

of how well the school is doing from the close tracking of pupils' progress. This is used to provide appropriate support, especially well for those pupils who find learning difficult. Senior staff and subject leaders regularly review teaching. However, there are times when this does not result in sufficiently focused feedback to aid improvement. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they act effectively as critical friends. They are closely involved in the school's work and, together with staff, they have created an effective development plan that provides a useful blueprint for further improvement.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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	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	1
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	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?	1
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	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

16 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Wood Ley Community Primary School, Stowmarket, IP14 1UF

I am writing to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school recently. I also want to tell you what we found out while we were there.

We really enjoyed the opportunity to watch you at work and play, and those of you we talked to told us how much you enjoy school and how well you feel the teachers help you to learn. You behave outstandingly well and this helps your teachers to teach you. You look after each other well. You also say that there is almost no bullying but that if it did happen your teachers would sort it out.

We agree that the teachers teach you many new things. They make many of the lessons very interesting and fun to do, and they provide you with an excellent range of activities and extra events, such as visits and visitors. Because of this, you become good at reading, writing and mathematics, and you know a lot about using the computers.

Mrs Ward and the teachers work very hard to make the school so successful, and you help by attending school as regularly as you can. We know the staff want the school to get even better. We have asked them to do two things to help this happen.

- Make sure that when you are set targets you understand exactly what they mean, and that when teachers mark your work that they make it clear what you can do to improve it.
- Make sure that those of you who find learning easier have work that really makes you think and use what you have learned.

You can help by responding positively to the changes the school makes. Thank you again for your help during our visit. Enjoy your time at Wood Ley and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms Lead inspector