

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135031
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	319595
Inspection dates	25–26 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Arnalena Bee

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Wolstenholme
Headteacher	Sarah Bentley
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2007
School address	Wensley Green Woodside Telford TF7 5NW
Telephone number	01952 386070
Fax number	01952 386071

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodlands is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There has recently been a high turnover of staff. When the school was last inspected in 2007, it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to achievement and standards, teaching and learning and the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. The school was given a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Woodlands is a rapidly improving school and now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher, along with her senior leaders and managers, check pupils' performance rigorously, which is improving achievement and beginning to raise standards. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils are now making expected progress in all classes. A legacy of previous underachievement has led to many pupils not reaching the levels expected for their age. Standards at the end of Years 6 are well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. In Year 2, standards are well below average but are improving especially in mathematics. In both of these cohorts, there are a high number of pupils with learning difficulties, which is reflected in the standards pupils reach.

Teaching has improved and is now satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve the provision in the Foundation Stage. The youngest children in the school now get off to a satisfactory start. Clearer planning in all classes helps pupils understand what they are expected to learn and activities are more accurately matched to their abilities and needs. Although there are pockets of good teaching, there are not enough to raise standards sufficiently. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have written targets for literacy and mathematics but the use of these to help pupils understand how to improve is better in some classes than others. Because of this, targets, especially in writing, are not contributing fully to pupils' achievement. In addition, teachers do not always develop pupils' writing skills as well as they could when marking pupils' work. The quality of teachers' marking generally is inconsistent and varies from class to class. Pupils are well looked after and cared for whilst in school and adults provide for their personal and pastoral needs effectively. The school is particularly successful in developing pupils' personal and social skills. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They want to learn and are appreciative of all that the school offers. As a result, attendance has improved to a satisfactory level. Pupils enjoy competing to be on time in order to win the 'Beat the Bell' punctuality competition prize. In the calm, bright and cheerful learning environment that has been created for them, pupils behave well and are usually kind and supportive of one another. Pupils' cultural development is not as strong as other areas. Their knowledge of different beliefs and religions that pupils have studied is limited. The curriculum is satisfactory but does not allow all pupils, particularly lower attainers including those who find learning difficult, to develop an adequate level of basic skills, particularly in writing. It offers a good range of extra activities, particularly sporting activities that encourage pupils to take regular exercise. Added to which, the strong focus on the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme enables pupils to develop a good awareness of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and eating sensibly. Pupils spoke confidently about a balanced diet and were adamant that 'too much fat is not good for you because it makes it difficult for the blood to be pumped around the body'.

Good leadership of the headteacher and her senior leaders and managers is enabling the school to make rapid progress in a very short time. Everyone works hard to make sure that pupils develop good personal and social skills. Further successes in improving the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement, as well as the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, indicate a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Parents are pleased with how quickly and happily their children settle into the Nursery and Reception classes. When children start in Nursery, most children's attainment is below the levels expected for their age and well below for literacy and language skills. The levels children reach by the end of Reception are slightly below average. Progress is satisfactory overall and this increases as children develop confidence and effective personal and social skills. This improved provision is the result of good leadership and management. Behaviour is good. In all classes, children work and play amicably alongside each other. The need to get on with each other is a high priority in all classes. Teaching is satisfactory. Activities are soundly planned for inside and in the secure area outside. The children in all classes are keen and eager to take part in all activities, either those that are adult led, or those that they choose themselves. In the Nursery, children are given many activities, which encourage them to begin to use crayons and pencils. In Reception, children have many opportunities to begin to 'write' and develop a satisfactory awareness of what letters and sounds mean when reading and writing. However, adults do not always give children enough clear advice and guidance on how to form letters and numbers correctly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching is good so that all pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage, make more rapid progress and reach higher standards.
- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in writing in all classes.
- Ensure that marking consistently informs pupils about what they need to do to improve to achieve their targets in English and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity and different religions in Britain today.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are well below average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 but average in science. Year 2 standards are well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. In addition, more pupils in Years 1 to 4 are now working at levels in mathematics that reflect their ages. In the past, pupils have underachieved in all parts of the school because of serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Achievement is now satisfactory in all classes. Pupils with learning difficulties generally achieve as well as their classmates because they are given appropriate support. School records show that a few of these pupils have made good progress because they have been particularly well supported. Improvements in standards and achievement are due to the eradication of inadequate achievement and pupils' progress being tracked both regularly and rigorously so that slow progress is identified more quickly. Senior leaders are also accurately identifying what is needed to improve further the teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science, but this has not had time to impact fully on pupils' standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral and social development is good. Their wider cultural knowledge and awareness of religious traditions and beliefs is limited. Pupils make decisions collaboratively in the school council, and behave well. They are considerate to each other, and behaviour is much improved since the previous inspection, resulting in the number of exclusions being drastically reduced. Despite a few parental concerns, pupils say that incidents of bullying are low and swift action is taken to deal with it when it does occur. Pupils recognise that the school is a safe place to be. They show a good awareness of how important it is to keep themselves safe. Pupils maturely identify potential dangers where they need to be extra cautious, such as on busy roads, by lakes and ponds, and when using electricity. There are good community contributions with concerts and dramatic performances, both in this school and in nearby schools. Pupils spoke sensitively about raising money for different charities and to improve the school environment. By the time pupils leave to go to secondary school, they display good personal and social skills. Their academic skills are not as strong and so they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has improved because the leadership team has monitored lessons regularly and helped staff to improve their planning and move towards adopting the best practice. Teachers have clear expectations of behaviour resulting in keen, motivated pupils. Relationships between adults and pupils are good, and most pupils are supported soundly in their learning. Teaching assistants work well with pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this has a positive impact on their progress. At times, work is not matched appropriately to pupils' needs and there is a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are not always high enough. However, in the best lessons teachers interact well with pupils to extend their learning. Pupils are well involved in the self assessment of their knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy at the end of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has been improved by better planning based on clearly defined objectives and outcomes for each subject. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but provision to support and improve pupils' writing is still not good enough to tackle weaknesses in their learning. Provision for science and information and communication technology is satisfactorily matched to pupils' learning needs. Those who find learning difficult, benefit from well planned additional help in withdrawal groups. However, at times activities are not well planned during class lessons and pupils are given too little guidance on how to improve. The curriculum is enriched well by visitors invited into school and a wide range of visits out, including residential visits. These particularly promote pupils' personal and social skills when pupils learn to live alongside each other. The school acknowledges that there is more to be done, however, to increase pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in British society. Good links with others enable

visitors, such as the fire service, to come in and promote many areas especially the personal, social and health education programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents recognise that all pupils are well cared for whilst they are in school. Health and safety arrangements are secure and child protection procedures are very well established. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. Good links with external agencies enable pupils with specific needs to be well supported. As one parent wrote, 'I am so pleased that my son's attitude to school and his behaviour has improved so much.' The school has implemented systems for tracking pupils' individual progress and targets for improvement are set. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information to raise pupils' achievement and standards. However, teachers' marking is not precise enough to help pupils improve and reach their targets, especially in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her senior leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. Together, they have given the school a clear direction whilst showing determination in successfully improving many aspects of the work of the school. Staffing is now more stable, but the school has undergone a high turnover of staff, which has not made the job easy. The staff have worked effectively together to improve teaching and learning and raise achievement in English, mathematics and science. Improvements in standards are beginning to be seen. There is still a way to go however, particularly in reading and writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Strategies that have been put in place to improve literacy have not yet had enough time to improve standards. The school acknowledges that the proportion of good teaching in the school is still not high enough to raise standards or achievement further and this is a significant priority for improvement. The governors are more involved in the work of the school and, as a result, are able to support and challenge the school more confidently and effectively.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Telford TF7 5NW

I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school when we visited you recently. We were pleased to learn how much you enjoy coming to school. We thoroughly enjoyed all the conversations we had with you and were pleased with how much you have learnt about eating healthily and keeping yourselves fit. You go to a satisfactory school, which has improved well since it was inspected last year.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You behave well and are polite to the adults who help you and visitors who come to school.
- You are well cared for and looked after in school.
- You have a good range of out of school clubs that you can choose to do.
- Teaching is satisfactory and teachers arrange some exciting visits out for you and invite interesting visitors in to talk and work with you.
- Teaching is now helping you to make better progress, although you still need to improve to reach the standards expected for your age.
- The headteacher and her staff lead and manage the school well.

We have asked the school to do a few things to improve the education you receive.

- Make sure that teaching is always good so that you all make good progress.
- Help you more with your writing and ensure that marking and your targets help you to improve your work so that you all make better progress and reach higher standards.
- Help you learn more about the different religions and beliefs that are found in Britain today.

You can all help too by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes for the future.

Nina Bee Lead inspector