

Woodside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123387
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	327896
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	484
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Cooper
Headteacher	Robert McDevitt
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gittin Street Oswestry SY11 1DT
Telephone number	01691 652446
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woodside is much larger than most primary schools and serves an area where there are some pockets of economic disadvantage. A very large majority of pupils are White British, though increasing numbers are joining directly from abroad, many speaking little English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has very strong links with the on-site Early Learning and Childcare Centre, as the school's EYFS manager leads learning and development in both settings. The Centre opened two years ago and is jointly managed by the governors and the local authority. It offers day care for children from birth to four years during school hours in term time and birth to eight years after school hours and during holidays for 50 weeks of the year.

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. It has several outstanding features. The reason behind its success is the drive and ambition of the headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and all staff, to provide for the individual needs of all pupils. This is recognised in many comments from parents, who said such things as, 'Despite being a large school, children are always treated as individuals and the rapport between teachers, headteacher and children is obvious.' The end result is pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved and develop extremely well into mature and responsible young people, keenly aware of their place in society and the contribution they can make to it. A particular strength in the care provided for individuals is the way that children new to the school are helped to settle. Those who join with little English are quickly enabled to take a full part in learning and all school activities.

There have been significant advances in the provision for children in the EYFS since the previous inspection when improving this provision was an area for improvement. Children make a good start, helped considerably by the very strong links with the Early Learning and Childcare Centre. The older children in the Centre learn with the school nursery and all benefit from a well organised and planned shared environment where exceptionally good use is made of the extensive outdoor areas.

Good progress continues through the school, pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. However, too few pupils gain the higher levels in the national assessments. Also, standards in mathematics are lower than those in reading and writing as pupils' basic calculation skills are not always sufficiently developed in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are then not able, or given enough opportunities, to use and apply these skills effectively in Years 3 and 4.

Pupils' good progress is due to two key factors: the good quality of teaching and the outstanding curriculum. Teachers plan well and good relationships mean that pupils are keen to work hard and do well. However, although good extra provision is made for gifted and talented pupils, the more able are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons. The curriculum provides pupils with an immensely rich diet of experiences. The classroom walls and displays around the school demonstrate the breadth of learning and include artwork of exceptional quality. All these experiences are enhanced by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, many of the latter led by outside experts. Because of all these experiences, pupils enjoy school enormously, as a parent typically said, 'My child is always ready for school two hours before he is due to go, he loves it so much.'

Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and that there is always someone with whom they can share their problems. Academic guidance for pupils is extremely well planned. Clear short-term targets are set for pupils and they know how they can improve their work. They are often expected to evaluate the success of their own learning and this is making a very real contribution to their progress.

There is a very evident sense of teamwork about all who work in the school and a corporate desire to provide the best for the pupils. With this and the progress the school is making, it is well placed to continue on the upward path.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the EYFS because of the orderly routines and secure environment. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of experiences planned for them, in particular the extremely good use made of the extensive outside area. After a time in their 'Forest School', children were returning, singing happily about all they had done. There is a good balance of activities led by adults and those children choose for themselves in the Nursery, but children have fewer opportunities to select their own learning opportunities in the Reception classes. Some of these activities in both areas do not have specific objectives set for what children are expected to learn.

Children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes as planning to help their learning and development is good. Adults, particularly in the Nursery, take every opportunity to develop children's language and other skills. For instance, a small group at the snack table were being encouraged to count the segments in their tangerines and challenged with questions such as, 'If you ate one piece, how many would you have left

' Other children were enjoying looking for the letters that made the sounds they had recently learnt.

A particular strength is children's personal, social and emotional development, which is outstanding. Children cooperate and share extremely well and the whole setting is a happy and purposeful environment. The care and welfare for all children is excellent, and carefully planned, and is indicative of good leadership and management, which has been responsible for the improvements made since the previous inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by improving pupils' basic calculation skills in Years 1 and 2 and by increasing pupils' proficiency in using and applying these skills in Years 3 and 4.
- Increase the numbers of pupils gaining the higher levels in the national assessments in Years 2 and 6 by ensuring that more able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress through the school, achieve well and leave having reached average standards. These standards are lower, though still average, in mathematics than in reading or writing. This is because pupils' basic computational skills are not mastered sufficiently effectively in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also do not have enough opportunities to develop the use and application of these skills. Standards in writing in the provisional results in the national tests in Year 6 in 2008 showed a good improvement from 2007. This is the result of effective initiatives put in place to raise standards in this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils very much enjoy coming to school because of the good company of their classmates and adults and because they enjoy learning. A pupil put it well when they said, 'I wouldn't want to go to any other school.' They develop extremely safe habits and feel very secure at school.

They respond exceptionally well to all they learn about how to keep fit and live healthily. Behaviour at all times is excellent and rates of attendance are good, having shown a rising trend in recent years.

Pupils make many contributions to the school and wider community through taking part in musical performances and events and through supporting many local, national and worldwide charities. For instance, an official in the local tourist office reported to an inspector that the school had sung carols in the local Heritage Centre, which had been much appreciated and that the pupils had been splendid ambassadors for their school. Good progress in basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the positive links with local businesses help prepare pupils well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know what they expect pupils to learn and their expectations are clear so that pupils are usually confident about tackling their work. Teachers' planning is good, reflecting their accurate knowledge of pupils' next steps in learning. Teachers capture pupils' interest well and this is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their exemplary behaviour. Often, teachers use questions skilfully to probe pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know the pupils well. Consequently, they are often able to pinpoint areas for improvement in pupils' work and target these accurately. All of these factors help pupils to do well. Nevertheless, there are some areas for improvement. The most important of these is that pupils are sometimes passive listeners and not actively involved in their learning. In these sessions, teaching assistants, who otherwise make valuable contributions to pupils' learning, are not utilised as fully as they might be. In addition, more able pupils sometimes mark time because they are given tasks which are too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school has worked hard to provide a stimulating range of experiences in which all pupils have the opportunity to excel. Participation in music and sport is particularly strong and further enhances the taught curriculum. Similarly, there is a vast range of clubs and activities run by specialist staff and many opportunities to compete at local and national level, which provide numerous opportunities for challenge. A good example of this is the recent addition of judo training, run by a national coach.

The emphasis on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT has resulted in pupils having increased confidence to work independently and creatively. There are many work-related activities through Business in the Community links. An enterprise club provides pupils with extended learning opportunities which focus on the skills required for future employment, for example pupils are encouraged to grow and sell their own fruit and vegetables from the newly extended eco-garden. Personal, social and health education is a further strength. A well thought out programme enables all pupils to explore sensitive issues in an imaginative way.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is genuinely inclusive, assessing the needs of individuals and groups with great care and doing everything possible to ensure that they are met, both within the school and through working effectively with a wide range of agencies. For example, specific provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has resulted in demonstrable gains in their achievement and clearly raised aspirations. All adults know pupils very well, understand their needs and listen to their concerns. Parents and pupils speak very highly of the school's work and are warm in their praise for teachers who have their welfare completely at heart. One parent spoke for many when saying, 'Woodside is a fabulously caring school.' Safeguarding requirements are met and health and safety procedures are rigorous.

Attention to academic guidance is similarly thorough. The school has developed a wide range of ways of gathering information from the pupils about how well they feel they are doing. As a result, pupils have a very strong sense of how they are getting on and what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong and determined leadership underpins the school's success. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that staff share their high expectations for pupils' personal and academic development and that pupils benefit from a rich range of worthwhile learning experiences. Self-evaluation procedures are rigorous and mean that the school has an accurate view of its performance. Consequently, the school improvement plan identifies pertinent areas for improvement and has a beneficial impact on pupils' achievement. However, the school recognises that a more precise focus on provision for the more able pupils is required to accelerate their progress.

Challenging targets are set for pupils' achievement and these have helped to raise teachers' expectations and to improve standards. Because teachers benefit from helpful feedback about their work from leaders, a climate has been created where everyone is trying hard to make the school even better. It is not surprising that teamwork is strong and staff morale high. The school's policy to promote community cohesion is being implemented extremely effectively and pupils recognise and benefit from the richness and diversity of a very wide range of cultures. The work of the governors is sound. They are led well by the chair and ensure that statutory requirements are met. However, some governors are fairly new to their posts and there is scope for them to ask more challenging questions to hold the school to account.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodside Primary School, Oswestry, SY11 1DT

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome that you gave to Mrs Boyle, Mr Westall and me when we visited recently. We very much enjoyed our time in your school and particularly listening to all you had to tell us about the things you enjoy. We are not surprised you told us that you would not want to be at any other school as yours is a good school.

You make good progress because you are being taught well. In particular, you make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes as things have improved in these classes since the last inspection. We thought that one of the best things about your school is the very interesting and varied things that you learn about. You also have lots of opportunities to try different things in after-school clubs. The adults look after you exceptionally well and you told us that you feel very safe in school and that there is always someone you can share problems with. We were particularly impressed with how well behaved you are and how well you are growing up into sensible young people who work hard to help others. All of these good things are happening because your headteacher and all staff are very keen and work very hard to make your school even better.

There are just two things we have asked your school to improve.

- You are not doing as well in mathematics as in reading and writing. This is because in Years 1 and 2, you are not learning how to do sums quickly enough, and then in Years 3 and 4, you are not learning well enough how to use these skills when you are working.
- Those of you who find your work easy are not always given sufficiently difficult work in lessons, so not enough of you reach Level 3 in the assessments in Year 2 and Level 5 in the tests in Year 6.

We are sure you will help the staff to make your school even better by continuing to work hard and trying to do your best.

Yours sincerely

John D Eadie

Lead inspector