

Wood Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123074
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327843
Inspection dates	25-26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Hugh Turner
Headteacher	Mr David Lewin
Date of previous school inspection	07 December 2005
School address	Titup Hall Drive Headington Oxford OX3 8QQ
Telephone number	01865 762575
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Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This primary school is larger than average. Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, and about half are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is very much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have difficulty with reading and writing is also very much higher than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The school has achieved the Sport England Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. It has a number of strengths, mostly relating to pupils' personal development and care. Standards are rising, even though they remain well below average in writing, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils who have difficulty with reading and writing and those speaking English as an additional language are also making expected progress or better.

The amount of good teaching is increasing but it is not yet consistently good across classes. This results in some uneven progress. Teachers are becoming much better at planning activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Older pupils feel they are now making much better progress during lessons because they do not repeat work and it is 'just about right...not too hard or too easy'. This view is supported by the school's own accurate assessments. However, teachers sometimes fail to capitalise on opportunities during lessons for higher attainers to work independently and use their initiative in order to accelerate their rate of progress.

The school has been through a period of considerable change. The senior managers and governors are working well to deal decisively with disaffection among pupils, and with underachievement, unacceptable behaviour and lack of morale. They are making good use of the advice from the local authority, a National Leader in Education and a National Support School. The effect of this has quickly become apparent. The school has appointed a number of new teachers alongside a new management team. They have successfully rebuilt the self-esteem of pupils and are taking effective actions to eradicate underachievement. For example, pupils in Year 1 and 2 are now building well on the good start they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is a considerable success and an excellent foundation for future learning and progress.

A group of older pupils confirmed the improving picture during an interview about their work. They were certain that the school has improved and that lessons were much more challenging. They explained that behaviour had improved and that they feel safe, happy and valued members of the community. They added, 'We like our school and can see that it is getting better...and teachers are much better at helping us fill in the gaps in our learning.' Parents' responses to the questionnaire confirm this and the large majority support the school.

The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their good personal development. Planning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been adapted to meet the needs of the different groups within the classes. However, it does not yet ensure there are enough opportunities in some lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative in order to sustain rapid progress.

Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Their personal development is good, and they are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. There are good systems to track their performance so that teachers can quickly identify underachievement and deal with it. Pupils are well guided and supported in their learning, so that they know what they must do to improve.

The quality of the leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. Leaders at all levels show a strong commitment to raising standards and good first steps have been taken towards monitoring and evaluating new initiatives in order to sustain recent improvements in achievement. However, the very clear educational direction provided has not yet resulted in all pupils making consistently good or better progress. Some less experienced managers are not yet sufficiently effective at influencing the quality of learning across the school to ensure greater consistency in pupils' progress. School self-evaluation, now undertaken by staff at all levels, results in actions that are increasing achievement levels and sustaining recent improvements. This confirms the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Most children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for the age group. They make good progress because teaching and learning are of good quality. However, around half do not reach the expected levels for their age by the time they move into Year 1. Shared provision and good links with the Nursery school, based in the same building, have considerably enriched the learning environment. The good curriculum ensures there are many opportunities for children to play and learn individually as well as in groups of various sizes. Role play and practical activities linked to a central theme are used particularly well to develop children's speaking and listening skills, extend their vocabulary and stimulate early writing activities. The emphasis on linking sounds to letters and naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet enables children to make good progress in communication, language and literacy. Occasionally, adults miss opportunities during free play activities to develop and increase children's language and communication skills through questioning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards.
- Ensure that teachers give higher attainers more opportunities to work independently and use their initiative in order to accelerate their progress.
- Develop the skills of leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating new initiatives in order to sustain recent improvements in achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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, mathematics and science but, because the vast majority of pupils now make the progress expected or better, achievement is satisfactory. Many pupils meet their challenging targets. This is due to the rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress, and prompt interventions when they fall behind. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are building well on the good start to their education received in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Standards reached at the age of seven have improved for the last three years and were broadly average in 2008. Standards are also rising by the age of 11, even though they remain low. The most recent tracking information for pupils in Key Stage 2 show the vast majority are now making expected or better progress and are meeting their challenging targets. Those pupils who are speaking English as an additional language and those who have difficulty with reading and writing are making expected or better progress. This is because of the good quality support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions, is good because the school has put considerable efforts into improving behaviour and building a caring and respectful community. Pupils' behaviour is generally good although a very small number sometimes find it difficult to settle quickly to tasks. Relationships are also good; pupils get on well with their teachers and each other. They show consideration and respect for each other whatever their backgrounds or cultures. Pupils are well aware of the importance of staying safe, eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They participate fully in the good range of physical activities the

school offers. Attendance is improving and is now broadly satisfactory. This is the result of the school's rigorous monitoring of attendance and punctuality. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and pupils are confident that their views are listened to. Recent improvements in pupils' progress and their ability to work together cooperatively mean they now leave the school as confident well-rounded individuals and satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A significant proportion of good teaching was seen during the inspection. Its impact was seen in the good learning and the interest and enjoyment shown by the pupils in these lessons. This is because the teachers successfully transmit their enthusiasm and expertise to the pupils. For example, older pupils were learning to solve logic problems and began devising solutions with enthusiasm. They rose to this challenge and the teacher helped them learn from their mistakes by asking well-framed questions which encouraged them to speak at length and use the appropriate vocabulary. However, there are inconsistencies. On occasions, teachers fail to exploit fully pupils' ability to work independently or their skills in exploring ideas for themselves. This slows the rate of progress, particularly for those pupils who work quickly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school is adapting the curriculum to make it challenging, relevant and exciting by making thematic links between the different areas of learning. Provision for information and communication technology satisfactorily supports learning across the curriculum as more laptop computers become available for use in classrooms. Improvements to the planning of literacy and numeracy are helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. However, planning does not always identify sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative. The good range of extra-curricular activities supports other aspects of pupils' personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are good, particularly in regard to child protection, risk assessment and health and safety. Good use of a comprehensive range of tracking data is helping staff to identify and meet the needs of individual pupils effectively and accelerate their progress. Systems to support pupils who have difficulty learning and those who are at the early stages of learning English are good. Academic guidance has improved markedly over the past two years. The performance of pupils is tracked carefully and this is helping to raise standards and achievement further. Marking is good and shows pupils how they might improve. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in setting personal targets and evaluating their work. This is developing well but is not yet firmly embedded across all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the new leadership team are working with determination to accelerate pupils' achievement. The actions they have taken are effective and checks carried out by the school show that pupils are now achieving the challenging targets set for them. Self-evaluation, which now involves staff at all levels, provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is setting itself realistic yet challenging targets and is achieving

them. The plan outlining areas for improvement is both manageable and appropriate. The school is right to focus on developing the role of managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating new initiatives. This will help to ensure greater consistency across the school in order to raise achievement further. Currently, staff are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating either the provision or its impact on pupils' progress. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has, for example, identified vulnerable pupils and families and is supporting them as part of the school's Nurturing Programme. However, it has yet to evaluate the impact of its actions on the community beyond the school itself. Governance is satisfactory overall. Governors are well led by the chair who has a clear vision for developing their capabilities to demand greater information on teaching, learning and achievement across the school in order to sustain recent improvements.

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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?	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 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 is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

10 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wood Farm Primary School, Oxford, OX3 8QQ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much. We judged that you go to a satisfactory and improving school. This will not surprise you, as many of you think the same. Here is a list of some of the things we most liked.

- Your headteacher and the teachers are all working well together to make your school even better than it is.
- You listen carefully to what your teachers say and behave well.
- Your work is improving and you are now making better progress in classes.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after and are helping you to improve your work.
- The school council represents your views well and you all help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and the other leaders know what needs to be done to improve the school, and have already started to do this. You can all help by continuing to work hard and by listening to your teachers' advice. There are three things to do next.

- Your teachers need to give those of you who learn quickly even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently. You said that you enjoy working this way and that it helps you succeed.
- There are many good lessons and we are asking your teachers to try to improve on this and make all of your lessons good or better. This will help all of you make even better progress.
- We would also like your teachers to check carefully how well the changes they are making are helping you learn better. They will then be able to improve your school even more.

I was pleased to meet a group of older pupils who explained to me how much your school is improving. They were delighted that lessons were now much more interesting and challenging and felt they were making much better progress.

Yours faithfully

John Earish
Lead Inspector