

Woolaston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115559
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379097
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Butler
Headteacher	Rosalind Escott
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 15 lessons taught by eight teachers. Eight additional class visits focused on the quality of the curriculum and a further three on marking and assessment. Also, the inspection team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and analysed work in pupils' books. They observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, and school development plans. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils, and 84 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well boys and girls in the middle of Key Stage 2 achieve, especially in writing.
- How effectively the school identifies any possible underachievement and accelerates progress for all groups of pupils.
- How effective the school's work is to improve marking and give pupils more opportunities for self- and peer-assessment.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school, where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small minority of pupils from service families joins and leaves the school between the Reception Year and Year 6. The proportion of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups is below the national average and there are very few pupils in school who are new to learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is lower than is typical nationally. Most of those pupils have difficulties related to language, communication and social skills.

The private pre-school provision on site is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection. Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable change in staffing and an extended period of temporary leadership. Three new teachers have joined the school. A large majority of members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, have joined recently and are new to their roles. The headteacher joined the school in May 2011. The school achieved Healthy School Plus status in 2011 and is currently working to achieve the 'Rights Respecting School' Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has sustained several strengths since the previous inspection, in spite of the recent period of considerable change and temporary leadership. Most significant is the continuing outstanding provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children learn extremely well and have done so since the previous inspection. The school provides good-quality care which contributes to pupils' good behaviour, good levels of enjoyment and the extent to which they feel safe in school. The school supports those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable successfully. That contributes to examples of individual pupils making good progress socially and emotionally. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, the pupils reflect thoughtfully on non-material qualities such as 'effort' and 'self-belief' and apply these to themselves. Their attendance is above average.

Although attainment in English and mathematics is typically above average for most pupils by the time they leave Year 6, their progress is satisfactory between Year 1 and Year 6. As a result of a close analysis of pupils' attainment and progress last year, the school provided targeted support to meet pupils' needs more speedily and effectively than previously. That has helped to reverse previous examples of underachievement for some pupils. Pupils in the middle of Key Stage 2 have made good progress in writing. Their attainment is broadly average and improving. The school plans targets now with a greater degree of challenge for individual pupils. The improvements in attainment in 2011 at both key stages appear set to continue and these 'green shoots' of school improvement indicate its satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Further indications of the satisfactory capacity lie in the headteacher's accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the good start made by members of the governing body in developing their roles in challenging the school. The purchase of an accessible, electronic system for tracking pupils' progress is a well-chosen priority, reflecting the headteacher's and governing body's recognition that, in order to analyse information, it must be understood more clearly. However, feedback given to teachers focuses more on detail about their teaching strategies than on the impact on pupils' learning in the lesson.

The curriculum is satisfactory because it supports learning adequately. Previous strengths in art have been sustained, which add enjoyment for pupils. The school is beginning to evaluate the impact of intervention programmes, but it is too soon for this to have had a full impact on pupils' achievement. The satisfactory rates of pupils'

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progress indicate competent teaching since the previous inspection. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and marking seen varied considerably, with just over half of lessons seen promoting good learning. That is not sufficient to secure good rates of progress over time and the level of inconsistency contributes to teaching remaining satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, planning addresses the needs of all groups of pupils specifically and so provides a good level of challenge. The best marking identifies the next steps in learning helpfully for the pupils, so they are well informed about what they are aiming for. Such practice is inconsistent across the teaching as a whole. The school involves pupils routinely now in assessing their own learning, but this is implemented with varying levels of skill and usefulness. Teachers are not held fully to account for their pupils' learning. That is because the extent of staff changes has distracted previous attempts to establish a rigorous and comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation in school. It is also because information about how well pupils are achieving is difficult to access and analyse. Opportunities for teachers to learn from the best practice in school are limited.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the percentage of good teaching to 80% by December 2012 by:
 - ensuring teachers plan specific and challenging learning intentions consistently for all groups of pupils in lessons
 - improving the consistency of helpful marking
 - giving staff more opportunities to share the features of good teaching and learning that are evident in the school
 - providing teachers with feedback that links the impact of their teaching methods to pupils' learning and progress.

- Hold teaching staff to account for pupils' learning more fully by:
 - making full use of the new electronic pupils'-progress tracking system
 - developing the governing body's understanding and use of assessment information
 - establishing a rigorous and systematic cycle for monitoring teaching and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In 2011, attainment in English and mathematics was lower than in previous years, but just above average and markedly above average for boys. Boys and girls currently in Years 5 and 6 are both on track to reach above-average levels of attainment. Typically, boys and girls of different abilities and from different backgrounds make similar rates of satisfactory progress now. Pupils are well

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motivated, which contributes to their good attainment and similar rates of progress. During the inspection, pupils made good progress in just over half the lessons observed. Expectations challenged all pupils in a younger class well because of well-planned, slightly modified expectations for different ability groups within the class. For example, the most confident young writers indicated a good level of skill and understanding when they described Cinderella’s ugly sisters as ‘demanding’ and ‘jealous’ in a piece of independent writing, while other pupils extended their ideas verbally or with adult support. Similarly, a good level of challenge, adjusted skilfully to meet varying needs in the class, resulted in pupils making good progress in selecting measuring units and methods to suit different purposes in a mathematics lesson for older pupils. On occasion, there is insufficient learning when pupils share the same task and the expectations of all are the same and too low for the majority. Learning is satisfactory when there is a reasonable level of challenge for most of the pupils for most of the lesson.

Pupils are interested in the world around them. They are tolerant of the diversity reflected in school and interested in cultures and backgrounds that differ from their own. Older pupils are clear about how they would tackle racist comments or attitudes. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. They have been directly involved in local initiatives, such as successfully lobbying for a skate-park. Extensive involvement in the development of a community orchard reflects their good understanding of environmental issues, as well as their healthy lifestyles. Reflecting the school’s Healthy School Plus status, pupils have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy choices. They accept roles of responsibility sensibly. The school’s work towards achieving the ‘Rights Respecting School’ award reflects its determination for pupils to become more active in relation to these areas. Given their satisfactory academic achievement, pupils are prepared adequately for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Specialist art teaching contributes to the good-quality work produced by pupils displayed around school. Staff have secure subject knowledge across the curriculum, which enables them to address any misconceptions as pupils approach new topics. Pupils have literacy and numeracy targets now and are mostly familiar with them, but the relevance and usefulness of the targets varies considerably. While some are highly apposite, others carry very little challenge. Effective involvement of pupils in assessing their learning helps them to identify the next steps to take. At its most effective, pupils set themselves timescales for achieving these, but, on other occasions, too much time is spent at the end of lessons with pupils indicating how they feel about their learning. Opportunities to reinforce and extend key learning intentions are missed, as a result. Good relationships between adults and pupils underpin positive behaviour management, which helps most lessons to proceed at a reasonable pace. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning when they are supporting or leading a group.

In lessons where practical and relevant activities are supported by good teaching, learning is good, but sometimes the curriculum does not facilitate such activities as much as it might. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Visitors enrich pupils' learning about healthy lifestyles and others give pupils direct experience of cultures that differ from their own. Pupils and parents and carers appreciate the recent extension of after-school clubs for pupils of all ages that support a variety of pupil interests. The curriculum supports pupils' academic development satisfactorily. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply key literacy, numeracy and technology skills in a variety of contexts. Adjustments to the curriculum to meet pupils' varying needs are relatively recent and the full impact is yet to be felt and evaluated. This is a caring school. Pupils from service families are welcomed warmly and helped to settle quickly, so rapidly they become ready to learn. The breakfast club provides a valuable service for families and those pupils who attend. It offers a sensitive, safe, warm and nurturing start to the day. The school can point to examples of individual pupils making significant gains in confidence and self-esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governing body and other senior leaders are motivated to drive further school improvement. Recent developments indicate that they have been effective in prioritising actions appropriately. Planning documentation, with its successful focus on increasing pupils’ progress and eliminating any pockets of underachievement, demonstrates the leaders’ shared ambition for the school. Responses from staff questionnaires indicate the staff’s continued willingness to contribute to the process, with unanimous agreement that the school is led well. It is too soon for the good leadership traits to have had a sustained and full impact, but, clearly, the leadership and management of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

The school’s commitment to equal opportunities and promoting anti-discriminatory attitudes is without question. It is evident in its success with pupils who face the most challenging circumstances. However, action to promote equality of opportunity in academic outcomes for all groups of pupils in school is recent. As a result, while there has been improvement in closing gaps in outcomes between different groups of pupils where the school has targeted its action, this has not been sustained over time. For that reason, the effectiveness of the promotion equality of opportunity is satisfactory rather than good.

Previous strengths in safeguarding have been maintained. The governing body is fully involved in the school, adopting recommended good practice across much of its work, although the very best practice of cross-referencing policies remains an area for development. There are particular strengths in staff training related to child protection and the extent to which the school is active in supporting pupils. The governing body makes a positive contribution to the school’s good understanding of its social context and its commitment to community cohesion by extending pupils’ experience within the school, the wider local community and beyond. Activities include shared musical events with other communities in the United Kingdom as well as letter writing links with a school in Gambia.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Highly effective leadership has ensured that children continue to flourish in this high-quality provision, which is much appreciated by those parents and carers who returned questionnaires. Previous strengths in promoting children’s independence continue. Children use the interactive whiteboard routinely and confidently to self-register, as they do the ‘planning chart’ to select their activities of choice throughout the day. Ensuring children’s welfare and safety is paramount. It permeates all levels of planning and day-to-day activities. For example, risk assessments are comprehensive, thorough, and reflect the nature of early years activities, while hand cleaning after ‘digging for worms’ or ‘outside mathematics’ is routine. The teacher and teaching assistant are a highly effective team and provide consistently good role models in how to speak and to behave. The care taken to ease children’s transition into school is exemplary.

The Stage is a ‘wrap around’ learning environment, where opportunities for learning throughout the day in every activity are seldom missed. For example, during a 10-minute fruit and snack time, children learned extremely well. That is because adults’ made good use of the time by encouraging children to identify ‘tricky’ words such as ‘no’ and ‘he’ and the pace of learning gathered momentum in response to children’s interests. As children began to play with sounds that rhyme with ‘no’, adults encouraged them to extend their application of phonics (the sounds letters make) and their recognition of letters and words, while having enormous fun. Every child was totally absorbed during the game and the level of learning was high as children searched through books and labels, while still extending their rhymes verbally. The adults’ high level of skill in taking children’s natural curiosity and playfulness, and using their ideas to promote further learning, is a key feature in the good and outstanding rates of progress made across all areas of learning. It was also exemplified as the teaching assistant supported a boy with his gluing activity; time was given to encourage his observation and wonder at the air bubble in the glue bottle, thus supporting his early skills of scientific enquiry and understanding, while enhancing his original gluing activity.

Assessment procedures are very detailed and used thoroughly to meet children’s individual needs, as well as to influence more-general plans. When children start school, any previous gaps or strengths in their experience are identified and addressed promptly. For example, while children join the Reception class at broadly expected levels for their age, staff have observed and noted that they are

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increasingly arriving with greater confidence in using gross motor skills. Consequently, they plan to harness and extend those skills from an earlier stage in the school year. Those strengths account for the majority of children leaving the Reception class with skills levels that exceed expectations for their age in all areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

More parents and carers returned questionnaires than is typical in primary schools. A few expressed a variety of concerns. There was most disagreement about the school helping to promote healthy lifestyles. Written comments indicated that this arose mostly from the school’s lack of provision for hot midday meals. Inspection evidence indicated that pupils have a good understanding of how to be healthy. Concern arose also about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw mostly good behaviour and behaviour being managed well. Pupils told inspectors that behaviour was good, with only some ‘silliness’ and no bullying. Other concerns raised by parents and carers focused on communication issues. Inspection evidence identified that the headteacher has increased opportunities for parents and carers to communicate with the school. That was commented on appreciatively in some questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woolaston Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	57	34	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	60	33	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	40	45	54	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	39	43	51	8	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	37	45	54	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	35	42	50	10	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	37	41	49	11	13	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	44	36	43	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	40	44	52	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	38	33	42	11	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	37	41	49	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	37	38	45	10	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	42	50	37	44	4	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woolaston Primary School, Lydney GL15 6PH

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school recently. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with inspectors to share your ideas and your work. We found your school to be satisfactory. That means that it does some things well and is working to improve other things. Here are some of the best things.

- You enjoy school and attend more regularly than most pupils of your age; this helps you to make the steady progress that is expected of you in English and mathematics and maintain the above-average standards you reach by the end of Reception Year.
- The provision in Reception Year is outstanding and helps those children to learn very well.
- You behave well in lessons and around school.
- You have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy choices.
- You know that staff care about you and are confident you have someone to turn to in school if you have a problem.
- You are interested in the world around you and reflect seriously about issues such as 'racism' and 'self-esteem'.

The governing body, headteacher and staff want to keep making the school even better. We have asked them to prioritise:

- making sure that teachers plan hard enough work for everyone in the class and that their marking is always helpful
- sharing their best ideas more often and making sure the teachers know exactly what works best for you
- involving the governing body in using the new system for checking how well you are learning over time and doing this regularly and rigorously.

All of you can help by continuing to attend and behave so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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