

Arnold Woodthorpe Infant School

Arno Vale Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham, NG5 4JG

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils flourish because this is an exceptionally happy place to learn. They achieve outstandingly well, regardless of their background, age or ability.
- Teaching is outstanding. Work is expertly planned to bring out the best in pupils of all abilities and, consequently, pupils reach high standards.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a great start because staff have expert knowledge and kindle a keen sense of fun.
- Teaching throughout the school is better than at the time of the previous inspection because it is very well led. Any relative weaknesses are quickly spotted and eliminated.
- All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their inquisitiveness and willingness to 'have a go' help them to make excellent progress.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They have learned how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, such as on the roads and when using computers.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a highly effective and ambitious hub. They drive improvement with consummate skill and determination to ensure that pupils receive a top-quality start to their education.
- The governing body carries out its duties extremely effectively, providing challenge to the school and supporting its work to ensure pupils are happy and successful.
- All the parents who responded to recent surveys recommend the school unreservedly to others.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed 16 lessons, five of which were lessons in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Four lesson observations and a study of pupils' work in books were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Two assemblies and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime were also evaluated.
- Discussions were held with pupils, two members of the governing body, including the Chair, the headteacher, staff, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including the support for pupils who need extra help and provision for the most able. They examined pupils' work in their books and on classroom and corridor wall displays, and heard pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for the school's future development, lesson plans, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, records of how pupils' learning is monitored and records of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including those expressed in the 80 responses to the online Parent View survey and in surveys carried out by the school, and correspondence received during the inspection.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at the 17 returned questionnaires and discussions with several members of staff.

Inspection team

Ruth McFarlane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Mosley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average for its type.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A smaller-than-average proportion come from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, is much smaller than average. In this school, pupils for whom this funding is received are all known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus is also below average. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- At the local authority's request, the headteacher provides occasional leadership support for other local schools.
- Before- and after-school care, located on the site, is run by other providers and is therefore not a part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the work already started to ensure that teachers' written marking explains how pupils can improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- From starting points that are in line with those that are typical for their age, pupils make outstanding progress. Standards by the end of Year 2 are consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leave the school almost a year ahead of pupils nationally.
- A far higher proportion of pupils than nationally achieve a standard typical of pupils who are two years older. The most-able pupils build well on their starting points because, as for all the pupils, they are encouraged to show intense curiosity about the world and they are shown how to learn for themselves, for instance, by looking facts up.
- High standards of work are modelled carefully by all the adults and this leads to everyone doing their best. Homework is completed to the same high standard as work in school.
- Pupils learn so effectively because the school picks up on any potential weakness quickly and introduces immediately remedial strategies that work. For instance, a special focus on learning appealing to boys has meant that there is no sign of boys' attainment being behind that of the girls, as they were unusually for the school, in 2013. Both boys and girls have responded well to the new sports funding initiative, participating in a 'Leap into Life' project to enhance fundamental physical skills for life, as part of the school's successful drive to promote healthy lifestyles and physical fitness.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn to listen carefully because they are listened to. Topics are fun. Children's work on the five senses included looking at fingerprints and whether they showed the 'whirl', the 'loop', or the 'arch', sparking great interest and curiosity. Children quickly learn to count, to make simple calculations and to identify the properties of shapes. This makes its impact on the competent manner in which Year 1 pupils write number sentences, adding tens and units, and Year 2 pupils calculate in their heads so fluently.
- Pupils use their phonics knowledge well. The published Year 1 phonics check results have been slightly below average, although they pull up to above average for Year 2 retakes. Additional staff training has generated improvement. Inspectors found no sign in the school of any relative weakness in this aspect.
- The most-able pupils in Year 2 are very confident and read widely. They outlined, with great enthusiasm, the stories and fact books they have read. Competence in reading has led to imaginative writing for a wide range of purposes. During the inspection, pupils recorded the results of a science experiment, accurately using complex sentences.
- The school supports each individual pupil equally, fostering good relations and refusing to allow discrimination. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress because they are included in everything. They are involved in checking whether they have met their targets and, as parents commented, 'The staff are fabulous' and 'They make children feel special.'
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit, not only from additional help, but also from the visual prompts for language that are evident in every classroom. These pupils make the same excellent progress as their classmates.

- Across the school, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same rates of progress or slightly better, than the others in their class, because the pupil premium funding is used wisely to provide additional help and resources tailored to their individual requirements. The number of eligible pupils in Year 2 in 2013 was too small to be able to comment on their attainment in English and mathematics without risk of identifying individual pupils.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Staff ensure that the Reception classrooms offer an exciting world of stimulating and purposeful activities that children are keen to explore. Reception children have a wealth of resources to choose from in the well-equipped outdoor area. Alongside activities which children choose for themselves, adults teach specific points at timely intervals, using their comprehensive knowledge of how well each child is doing in developing their skills and understanding.
- Throughout the school, adults take every opportunity to exploit pupils' curiosity, to engage learners in conversation and to develop their language and understanding. During the inspection, squeals of delight and a constant buzz of interest showed how well the exciting range of subjects and themes are presented, tapping pupils' varied interests. Year 1 pupils delighted in working in groups using tablets and clipboards to photograph and record their work when trowelling up soil in the school grounds to discover what lurked beneath. This is just one example of the vastly improved provision and use of information and communication technology (ICT) that supports learning so well.
- Warm relationships underpin the high-quality teaching across the school. Expectations are very high and meet with pupils' enthusiastic best effort. Classrooms are welcoming. Attractive displays provide prompts for learning and celebrate pupils' achievements. All opportunities are taken, through the wide range of exciting activities and assemblies, to develop high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Teachers are skilled in using what they know of pupils' attainment to provide work that is just right to deepen and extend understanding. This ensures that even the most able need to work hard to achieve success, and pupils rise to the challenge. The quality of advice teachers give orally during lessons is excellent. Teachers are adept at using questions to draw on pupils' existing understanding and extend it to help pupils make the best possible use of time.
- Teaching assistants are very well directed and contribute much to pupils' learning and well-being. Other support staff, including maintenance and catering staff, also contribute to making the school a happy and nurturing place to learn and develop.
- Teachers' written marking is, in some cases, excellent and has improved as a result of a current school focus. The best offers praise and 'quick win' guidance as to how pupils can improve. However, some teachers are not giving pupils enough written guidance, and this could potentially hold up progress for pupils seeking a reminder as to how to get to the next level in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils throughout the school are extremely polite and courteous with each other and with all the adults.
- Pupils are curious to find things out and appreciate what the school is doing to make learning 'fun and exciting'. They strive to do their best and are rewarded by their outstanding

achievement. They respond very positively to challenges and, for their age, they persevere with sustained concentration. They work very well together, supporting and encouraging one another.

- The school is litter-free because pupils are very caring about their environment. This tidiness and care is carried into pupils' workbooks. These are often a joy to behold and reflect the school's efforts to instil its standards of care and respect. Pupils take great pride in writing with increasingly neat handwriting.
- Pupils' love of school explains why overall attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy playtime immensely but hurry back to class when it ends, keen to get on with their learning.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey and the school survey, and who corresponded with the inspector during the inspection, were extremely happy with the care provided by the school and the standards of behaviour. They say they are confident their children feel safe.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils confirm that they get on well together and feel very safe. They are developing mature attitudes to assessing risks for themselves.
- Year 2 pupils can articulate their ideas about different types of bullying and are confident that any adult in school would deal with any incidents swiftly and fairly. School records show that incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare and always managed effectively.
- The skilled behaviour management by teachers and support staff ensures that classrooms and playgrounds are happy places to play and learn.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The skilled, insightful and determined leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher has helped teaching to become outstanding. Leaders regularly check its quality. They train and support staff to become outstanding practitioners, and arrangements to support colleagues are exemplary. The impact is clear to see in pupils' outstanding achievement.
- School self-evaluation is sharply focused and accurate, underpinned by meticulous tracking of pupils' progress and detailed review of all aspects of provision. All staff, whether with official responsibilities or not, make a strong contribution. This leads to the setting of appropriate priorities in school development plans. The priorities are linked to the targets set through the comprehensive performance management process. Regular meetings to check on pupils' progress enable leaders to hold teachers to account for achievement in each class. Pay is securely linked to this accountability.
- Time is given to develop pupils' interests across a wide range of subjects. Subject leaders contribute very well, leading themed work such as the 'science week' that was taking place during the inspection. Work on moral values and social skills cultivate pupils' outstanding behaviour. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to learn about democracy. Pupils experience how music, art and drama can enhance their lives. For instance, all the pupils in Year 2 learn the recorder. In workbooks scrutinised, pupils show they learn about contrasting cultures in places such as Italy, China and India.
- Parents are exceptionally supportive and recognise the quality of the school. 'The school creates

a sense of wonder from which children are excited about learning' was a typical parental comment.

- The local authority is always ready to support when requested and provides good advice. The school is so successful that the headteacher regularly supports improvement when requested by other schools. She is also a member of the JAT (Joint Area Team) at multi agency meetings, and the SBAP (School Behaviour and Attendance Partnership) to represent other schools and contribute supportively for pupils and to other schools.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is highly effective and its members are passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement is outstanding. Governors are very well informed and bring a wide range of experience to their work. They have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and how performance management is used to reward the best teachers. They know how mentoring and coaching supports any that fail to maintain the high standards set. They have an extremely good grasp of how to interpret assessment data in order to keep a sharp eye on the school's performance.
- Governors strike an effective balance of support and challenge for all leaders. They are fully involved in the decision making about how pupil premium funds are used and have developed robust skills to monitor its impact. In considering how to spend extra funding for sports, they were keen to ensure sustained long-term benefits when the funding ceases. Alongside school leaders, they undertake a systematic review of the impact of this funding to help them ensure where extra provision is most effective.
- Governors' astute overview of finances has led to significant improvements in ICT provision, and they carefully monitor how well this is used to support pupils' learning.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met fully and that pupils are kept safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122511
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	431557

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Thomas
Headteacher	Sharon Mackay
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2009
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