

# Woolaston Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115559
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326222
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Harlow HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	198
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andy Woodnutt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Bowen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Netherend Lydney GL15 6PH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01594 529270
<b>Fax number</b>	01594 529270

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Woolaston Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. It serves the village and neighbouring towns and villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average and these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behaviour problems. An acting headteacher has been in post for two terms due to the secondment of the headteacher to the local authority. There is a privately run playgroup on the school site providing Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'We are very pleased with the progress our children have made at Woolaston Primary school. All the staff are friendly and helpful.' 'We are very lucky to have a school like this for our children.'

These comments reflect the views of most parents and they are right! Woolaston is a good school; it is indeed a harmonious community where pupils thrive. All at the school are working exceptionally hard to do the best for the pupils; as a result pastoral care is outstanding.

Achievement across the school is good. The children get off to a flying start in Reception where all make at least good and often excellent progress because of exceptional teaching and care. This good progress continues across Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils attain above average standards in all subjects by the time they leave. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good attention they receive from all the adults. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed because of the school's strong commitment to ensuring their good personal development.

Relationships between the adults and the children are excellent. This ensures good, and frequently excellent, behaviour. Teaching is consistently good. Consequently, the pupils respond enthusiastically, concentrate well and work hard. That said, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility for their learning, and assessment, including marking, although rigorous, does not involve pupils enough to ensure they all fully understand their targets for improvement.

The curriculum is good. Every effort is made to provide the children with practical, motivating experiences that stimulate their thirst for learning. Good links are developing between subject areas where relevant, and opportunities for outdoor learning are a real strength. The school works well with the local community and there is an excellent range of visits and clubs on offer which the pupils, parents and carers appreciate.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The way senior leaders managed a tricky start to the inspection due to difficult travelling circumstances was exemplary. The support they received from the chair of governors was also commendable. The school knows itself well and sets the right targets to make it even better. Governance is strong and partnerships are good. Overall, parents are very supportive of the school. Nonetheless, understandably, a significant majority expressed concerns about the absence of the headteacher, recent temporary staffing issues and the new setting arrangements for mathematics. The governors and senior leaders are taking these concerns seriously and appropriate plans are in place to resolve them. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity for continued improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

'My child is making excellent progress.' 'My child has settled into school very well, teaching is fun and creative.'

These parental comments are fitting tributes to the high quality of provision in the Reception. The children make an impressive start to their lives in school due to the outstanding care and welfare they receive, coupled with exemplary induction procedures. Most children arrive with

the skills typically expected for their age and a significant number have well-developed personal skills. They demonstrate exceptional levels of enjoyment, independence and concentration in all areas of their learning because of 'truly outstanding' teaching, as one parent aptly commented. Consequently, they make at least good, and often excellent, progress in all aspects of learning because activities capture their imagination and excite them to learn. In lessons, the children move around the classroom confidently and calmly, fully aware of the daily routines, including independent registration. They play and work well together and are happy to plan and pursue their own learning interests independently. Lessons are vibrant, full of rich well-resourced opportunities for the children to explore the world around them, yet at the same time develop the important skills in language, number, information and communication technology and personal development. Planning such as the imaginative work on 'Percy the Park Keeper' is structured carefully to achieve this and activities in the outside classroom are chosen sensitively to enrich all aspects of their learning. The use of a camera linked to the computer and interactive whiteboard to photograph birds visiting the bird table was an excellent example of how learning is brought alive for the children.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding. The adults keep a very close check on each child's progress and assessment systems are rigorous. Parents are kept informed appropriately and all documentation is of a high quality.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning.
- Involve pupils more in the assessment of their work and that of their peers.
- Ensure marking provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter Year 1 with levels that are above national expectations due to the excellent start made in the Reception. They make good progress through Key Stage 1, especially in writing where recent intervention work has been effective in raising standards. National assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008 show that standards are above average in writing and mathematics and just above average in reading. Inspection evidence showed that good teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in Years 1 and 2 is now improving attainment at the higher levels in reading. Younger pupils were observed reading fluently with confidence, expression and enjoyment.

Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 due to consistently good teaching coupled with rigorous assessment to track individual achievement. Although targets set for pupils are challenging, the performance of different groups is not clearly documented and easily accessible. Standards in art, as evidenced in high quality displays such as 'portraits', 'Greek bowls' and 'kites', are above those found nationally due to excellent specialist provision. The skilled teaching assistants are well deployed; as a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The dedication and commitment exhibited by all the adults to the development of the whole child results in pupils believing that they can achieve. Without exception, children enjoy school

and feel they have a voice. All are delightful and refreshingly open in conversation, showing a well-developed sense of respect and care for others. This is particularly noticeable in 'talking partners' and group play.

Because the school places a strong importance on developing the pupils' self-esteem, their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from a good range of opportunities designed to cultivate these aspects, for example the 'global compassion' programme and the poignant assembly on 'perseverance' where the pupils sing with enthusiasm. The steady work of the school council to improve play resources contributes to the harmonious ambience at lunchtimes where the pupils play together happily. Attendance has improved recently; it is now good, as is punctuality.

Behaviour is good, and at times exemplary. The pupils move sensibly in class and cooperate well in paired discussions and group tasks. Around the school, they say 'hello' to visitors and adults and invariably greet them with warm, friendly smiles. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and participating in exercise. They feel very safe in school and know there is an adult to turn to if in need. When asked about bullying, a pupil said, 'there is always someone to turn to if we have a problem'. Pupils are developing good basic skills that prepare them for their next school and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and there are good cross-curricular links which make learning interesting. As a consequence, pupils work well and develop good attitudes to learning. That said, there are insufficient challenges provided for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to be involved in their own and the assessment of others. Teachers deploy a good range of strategies and resources which match pupils' learning styles, enabling them to make good progress. For example, younger pupils used appropriate actions enthusiastically to reinforce the use of punctuation as they read the class book and older pupils thrived on the excellent problem-solving tasks to apply their knowledge and understanding of shape, fractions, multiplication and decimals.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Carefully designed topics and meaningful links planned between subjects ensure that the curriculum motivates pupils to learn. Staff work hard to bring learning alive through relevant opportunities for outdoor learning and first-hand experiences. This supports pupils' achievement; for example, visits to a local castle and the Forest of Dean have helped to inspire boys to improve their creative and descriptive writing. Well-chosen themes promote community cohesion, and the local environment is used extensively. The school also ensures pupils learn about other cultures, as evidenced in displays and curriculum plans. Regular use of the school minibus enables pupils to make visits to local centres, and appropriate international links have been established with a school in France and a cultural link with Japan to enrich learning. Nonetheless, there is scope for more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning. Thoughtfully planned breaks in the timetable, coupled with a rich provision of after-school clubs and activities, contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Adults are exceptionally committed to the care and welfare of the pupils, which contributes to the pupils' enjoyment at school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe are in place, including those relating to child protection. The site is well maintained, attractive and secure. The school has worked hard to develop extended provision through the breakfast club. This is well organised and provides an excellent start to the day. There are good links with outside agencies to ensure that pupils' social and emotional needs are met. Although pupils' progress is checked robustly, not all marking identifies what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Highly committed and caring leadership by the acting headteacher, ably supported by a skilled senior leader and staff team, is ensuring that the school continues to move forward in spite of recent difficulties in staffing. The senior team possess complementary strengths; discussions are refreshingly honest and leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The delegation of leadership is good throughout the school and all adults are developing into competent leaders of learning. They receive effective professional support; as a result, there is an infectious team spirit permeating throughout the school. The school's systems for checking on its improvements are rigorous but they are not sufficiently sharply focused in its improvement plan. The governors know the school well and are holding the school to account in a challenging and supportive manner.

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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?	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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	2
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	2
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**

17 February 2008

Dear Children

■ Inspection of Woolaston Primary School, Lydney GL15 6PH

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I am writing to say thank you very much for giving us such a warm welcome during our recent visit to your school. We were impressed with the way you greeted us so courteously with warm, friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work, seeing you play together and hearing you sing so enthusiastically in assembly. What delightful children you are! Your school is good in many ways. Here are some of the special things that it does well:

- Your school looks after you exceptionally well and the adults want to do their best for you.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good; at times, they are exemplary. Everyone in the school cares for each other, including the playground buddies!
- In Reception, you get off to a flying start in all aspects of your learning; you make good progress in all other year groups and achieve good standards by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your teachers plan interesting activities for you, which help you to enjoy school.
- The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and it has made a significant contribution to the purchase of play equipment which you appreciate.
- There are lots of clubs and visits, which you participate in enthusiastically. You contribute well to the local community.
- Your acting headteacher and other adults are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be. They listen to your views and those of your parents and carers in helping them to do this.

You have such a caring acting headteacher, supportive adults and committed governors at the school. We have asked them to make sure that you have more opportunities for independent work and become more involved in the assessment of your work so that you are clear about your targets for improvement.

It was a real privilege to visit Woolaston. Keep up the good work and, most importantly, continue to enjoy your learning.

Best wishes for the future; we hope that you achieve great things!

Mrs Harlow HMI

Lead inspector