

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117181
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379369
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graeme Franklin
Headteacher	Jane Woods
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	8–9 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones

Additional inspector

Paul Barraclough

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited two assemblies and 18 lessons, observing nine teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection; they observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 66 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Woodlands Primary is broadly average in size for a primary school. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of different backgrounds. The predominant minority ethnic groups are of African or Asian background. Fewer pupils than average join or leave the school partway through their primary education. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below the level found in most schools. None are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school holds National Healthy School Status. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

A playgroup meets each afternoon in the school, and there are daily breakfast and after-school clubs. These facilities are not managed by the governing body and were not visited during this inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has improved since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. Its strengths stem from the vision and leadership of the headteacher and a shared determination that pupils should do well. It is not outstanding because pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are not maximised in the younger age groups, and some middle leaders do not yet contribute enough to driving school improvement.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 2 than in the other key stages. Younger pupils understanding and use of mathematical terminology are not sufficiently broad and their skills in writing are not fully developed. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the outdoor area is not fully used to promote early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Effective teaching ensures that pupils make good progress over time. Teachers willingly embrace new initiatives and generally use resources well, but do not always make best use of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities to support learning. In the younger classes some pupils, particularly the most able, are not always challenged to reach their full potential.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and enthusiastic to learn, and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are good. Teaching is monitored effectively, and has improved since the last inspection. Not all middle leaders and teachers are fully conversant with the updated assessment system and how it can be used to challenge teaching and accelerate pupils' performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:

- making more effective use for the outdoor area to promote learning in literacy and numeracy
 - providing greater challenge for more-able pupils, especially in writing
 - ensuring pupils gain a better and wider understanding of mathematical terminology.
- Ensure that good practice in the use of the recently purchased ICT equipment is promoted effectively throughout the school to enhance pupils' learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Refine the skills of middle leaders in analysing and using assessment information to challenge teaching and raise attainment.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They settle quickly and make good progress in developing their social, creative and physical skills. However, their progress in literacy and numeracy is not quite as rapid. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from entry into school. Indications are that by the end of the year, the three-year trend of rising attainment and accelerated progress is likely to be continued. Pupils respond well to effective teaching. Pupils in Year 6 worked with sustained enthusiasm in their literacy lesson. They studied pictures of contrasting objects carefully before committing their thoughts to paper. They linked the features of the objects with human attributes. For example, the grill of a car was compared to a 'smile' or 'a set of teeth', while the arching branch of a tree was described 'like the back of a fragile old person'. Similarly, they used computers effectively to access the internet to solve mathematical problems. They demonstrated good social skills as they worked well together. They respected and built on each other's ideas and suggestions to find answers to the questions. However, this good practice in the use of ICT is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and use this approach well to support their reading. In a mathematics lesson, they interpreted bar graphs confidently but at times their progress was hampered by their limited understanding of mathematical terminology. Pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year.

Pupils' progress is accelerating because senior leaders hold regular meetings with each member of staff to discuss individual pupils' attainment and progress. The progress of most White British pupils and other sizable groups is above that found nationally. However, some more-able pupils are capable of reaching higher levels in their work. The progress of the majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly similar to their peers, although it is slightly slower in writing and mathematics. The school is aware of this and is taking effective measures to address the issue.

The large majority of parents and carers consider that their children are making good progress, and that the school helps their children develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspectors endorse their views.

Quality of teaching

In most lessons, teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work that builds on previous learning and is well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers ensure that pupils know the purpose of each lesson. They use questioning skills well to probe the pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. Any misconceptions are addressed effectively and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Pupils take an active part and make a good contribution to their learning. However, in a small minority of lessons, pupils do not make the same accelerated progress because the work is not always well matched to their needs. This is because assessment information is not used effectively to identify precisely the expected learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities.

In the large majority of lessons, good use is made of opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and consistently provide pupils with clear next steps guidance towards improving their work and reaching their individual learning targets.

The approach to delivering the curriculum captures the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They enjoy the topic or thematic approach. For example, pupils in Year 1 were enthusiastic about their topic on growing. They spoke confidently in the whole-school assembly, recounting their visit to Kew Gardens and the work they had undertaken in school. It linked together well their learning in English, mathematics, science, music and art. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage best use has not been made of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom to promote the children's early literacy and number skills.

Teachers act as good role models to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school, the relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good. This ensures that the pupils feel confident and secure. This is a particular strength in the Early Years Foundation Stage and helps the children settle quickly into school routines. The school's inclusive ethos and the celebrations of the different cultures promote pupils' cultural development effectively.

Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire either agreed or strongly agreed that their children are well taught at this school. Inspectors endorse this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of its resources and the environment. Pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous. In lessons, and around the school, they behave well and show respect and consideration for each other. They demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning. Pupils are keen to celebrate the customs and cultures of different nationalities within the school and in the local

community. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. They are certain that there is no bullying of any kind whatsoever in the school and that if there were it would be dealt with immediately and effectively. They are confident that if they have any concerns, these are dealt with promptly and fairly by adults. Older pupils enjoy taking care of younger children and willingly take on responsibilities at various times during the school day. They are able to explain clearly the issues relating to personal safety and have a good awareness of internet safety matters. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes significantly to their good behaviour.

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire say their children are feel safe at school are nearly all consider that behaviour is good. Inspectors endorse their views.

Leadership and management

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher the school has moved forward and has demonstrated the capacity for further improvement. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed well. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is rising and the rate of progress accelerating. The senior leadership team have the confidence of staff, pupils and parents and carers. They provide drive and direction to the school and are supported effectively by the middle leaders. Together they have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the school development plan is focused on the right issues to raise attainment and improve pupils' progress. The quality of teaching is monitored systematically and staff have responded positively to leaders' initiatives to drive their professional development forward. A series of focused training sessions have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. External and internal support is offered to teachers new to the school.

The school's computerised tracking system for recording and analysing pupils' attainment and progress has been updated, but currently not all middle leaders and teachers are fully conversant with its use. Some middle leaders are relatively recent appointments. They are quickly acquiring a good overview of their areas of responsibility, but have yet to refine their skills in using assessment data and in critically monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on learning.

The governing body is not complacent and performs its duties well. Systems and structures ensure that pupils are well cared for and the school meets the latest government requirements on safeguarding. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body know the school well and have a good overview of its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher makes good use of the Vice Chair's professional skills to provide the governing body with a detailed analysis of attainment and progress. Through the close monitoring of outcomes, the governing body ensures that the school promotes equality and that any extremely rare incidents of discrimination are investigated thoroughly and if necessary action is taken.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Considerable and successful emphasis is placed on ensuring that it promotes a love

of learning, and the well-considered theme approach ensures that pupils enjoy the acquisition of skills and knowledge across different subject areas. The curriculum is supported effectively by many extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school, and promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Borehamwood, WD6 5JF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school, and for completing the questionnaire. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. A special thank you to the pupils in Year 1 for letting me join you for your assembly. I really enjoyed finding out about your visit to Kew Gardens and all the exciting things you have been doing at school. My colleague and I hope that that the Year 3/4 performance goes well. You were practising very hard for it while we were there.

Your school provides you with a good education. By the end of Year 6 your attainment is similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Your progress and achievement are good. In our discussions, you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you well. You know that you can turn to them if you are worried. We saw that you behave well and show respect for each other. We were also very pleased to see that your attendance is improving and is now above average. Well done.

We have asked the school to do these things to help you make better progress and reach higher standards.

- Improve your literacy and numeracy skills by making more use of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Key Stage 1 by helping you to have a better understanding of mathematical words and demanding a higher level of work when you are writing.
- Make certain that teachers use the computers and other electronic devices effectively to help improve your learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Make certain that the teachers in charge of subjects make consistently good use of assessment information to identify those who need particular help.

Please remember, to make your school better you must always try your best.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones
Lead inspector

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