

Woodthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121290
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	358974
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

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	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barrie Ferguson
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Rawling
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 29 lessons, which included the work of 19 class teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and spoke to some parents and carers. They observed the school's work, looked at safeguarding documentation, pupils' records and test results and scrutinised pupils' work from the current and previous academic year. Questionnaires were analysed from 122 parents and carers, along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

- Current levels of attainment, learning and progress across the school and the impact of work to accelerate progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- The extent to which learning and progress are now consistent enough to ensure that all pupils are making as much progress as they should be.
- The extent that the recent improvements in the use of assessment data and teaching are ensuring that the needs of all pupils are being met in lessons.
- How effective the quality of leadership at all levels is, including governance, in securing improvements and demonstrating capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

This larger-than-average school serves a diverse area to the west of York city centre. The number on roll has fallen each year for the last three years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but there is small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds or who have English as an additional language. A below-average proportion has special educational needs and/or disabilities as is the proportion who have statements of special educational needs. A very small proportion of pupils is looked after by the Local Authority. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery for children aged three and above and two Reception classes, which admit children twice during the academic year. Since the previous inspection there has been a considerable amount of staff change, including both senior leaders and classroom teachers. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2010.

The school site is used by a privately-managed playgroup to provide day care for children aged 2 to 3. This is inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

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

Woodthorpe Primary currently provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. There are strengths in the good care, guidance and support that are provided for pupils. Although parents and carers are generally supportive of the school, particularly in identifying the positive impact of the new headteacher, they rightly raise a number of concerns about the school's effectiveness. These issues in part reflect why the school is currently satisfactory rather than good. There have been some significant staffing difficulties following the previous inspection and, as a result, the school has not been as successful as it wanted to be in raising standards and improving progress in all subjects. These difficulties have been a contributory cause of the variability in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. However, under the good leadership of the new headteacher the school is now largely back on track and making improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' rates of progress are improving and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Key to recent improvement has been a sharp focus on self-evaluation, the detailed tracking of pupils' attainment and holding all teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their care. Shortcomings identified in teaching are being tackled rigorously and improvements to lesson planning, including clearer learning objectives and the better use of the classroom environments to support learning, are all having a positive impact. Although senior leaders are clear that there is much work yet to be done and have sound plans in place for improvement, the quality of leadership at other levels is variable. Middle leaders are keen to bring about improvement but their skills are underdeveloped.

Overall, achievement between Year 1 and Year 6 is satisfactory; however, progress and standards vary from year to year and across subjects, with a relative weakness in mathematics. This unevenness is linked to the variability in the quality of teaching although it is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good but there are also lessons where teaching is inadequate. Planning has recently been improved and planned activities generally meet the needs of most pupils. However, on some occasions activities are not tailored well enough to engage and challenge all levels of ability, particularly for some more-able pupils. When this occurs the pace of learning slows and some pupils lose interest. Good care, guidance and support and a positive ethos ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good social skills and their good positive contribution to the school and wider community. Most pupils say that they feel safe, that they understand the school rules and, if any problems arise, they are confident that the staff will sort them out.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils, particularly in mathematics, by;
 - making sure that systems for providing marking and feedback to pupils about their work are more consistent, and ensure that pupils have time to read and/or respond to their teachers' comments
 - ensure that targets are used more effectively to inform pupils and their parents and carers about exactly what pupils need to do in order to move from one level to the next.
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching so that none is inadequate and more is good by;
 - ensuring the accuracy of assessments through rigorous moderation
 - using assessment information about individual pupils more effectively in order to plan lessons that engage and challenge all pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' capabilities, particularly for more-able pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership at all levels, including governors, by:
 - clarifying the expectations of subject and middle leaders
 - developing the skills of subject leaders in influencing provision and outcomes in their subjects or areas of work
 - developing governors' skills so that they can be fully involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school and holding all leaders to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory overall. From wide and varied starting points when children join the Nursery they make satisfactory progress overall to reach broadly average levels of attainment when they leave at the end of Year 6.

However, across the school, attainment, learning and progress vary from year to year and across subjects. Although attainment at the end of Year 2 is typically average, in 2010 it declined, particularly in reading and writing, and was well below average. Over the past three years the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 has been particularly variable and for some pupils their progress was poor overall. Inspection evidence shows that rates of progress across the school are improving and are now satisfactory overall, with clear evidence of some accelerated progress in Years 5 and 6. However, despite improvements, mathematics remains a relative weakness and progress for some pupils stalls. This unevenness is linked to variability in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully included in lessons and they make progress that is similar to that of their peers. Pupils in the care of the Local Authority are fully included in the life of the school and because of the good support they receive they make good progress.

Much of the behaviour in lessons and around the school is good but it is satisfactory overall, with some classroom behaviour that does not always contribute to good learning

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for all pupils. This tends to be where pupils are insufficiently engaged in lessons and where behaviour management strategies are not always used appropriately. Pupils state clearly that behaviour is much improved and most say that they know who to turn to if they have any problems and believe that staff will help them. Pupils' awareness and take-up of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory; they like physical education but the extent to which they choose healthy snacks at break time is limited. Pupils play a good role in school and wider community life, such as by acting as school councillors. They respond well to appeals which are close to them, for example by supporting 'Help for Heroes' as a pupil's father was in the Armed Forces. Pupils' basic skills and positive attitudes to learning mean that they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. Attendance is average. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall and there are strengths in pupils' moral and social development. They are polite, know right from wrong and can think maturely about moral dilemmas.

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	3
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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 contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, ranging in quality from good to inadequate. Where teaching is good the expectations of pupils are clear and tasks are usually matched to pupils' learning needs providing interesting and practical activities. In these lessons, effective questioning checks pupils' understanding of what is being taught, pupils work well in pairs, resources are well-organised and additional adults are well-used. However,

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these features are not found consistently in all lessons. In some lessons, expectations are low and work is not well-matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils. In such lessons, pupils are expected to listen to their teachers too often rather than spending time completing their tasks; where this happens the pace of learning slows and some pupils become restless. Regular assessments of pupils' work and levels of attainment are undertaken. However, the accuracy and reliability of assessments are variable. The marking of pupils' work is undertaken routinely but across the school practices vary. It does not always show pupils what they need to do next to improve their work and pupils do not always have the opportunity to correct their work after it has been marked. Although pupils have been provided with individual targets, these are not widely known by pupils.

The opportunities provided by the curriculum are satisfactory. The school is in the process of developing a themed approach to the curriculum so that pupils can more readily understand the connections between subjects and consolidate their knowledge. Pupils say that they enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT) and a wide range of visitors are invited in to school to support learning and to make it fun. For example pupils talked enthusiastically about a visit from a 'Roman soldier'.

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. Transition arrangements as pupils move through and out of the school are effective. The pastoral support team is an integral and valued group within school because it offers both pupils and their parents and carers counselling along with academic and emotional support. Behaviour and attendance issues are tracked and swiftly acted on and both these areas have improved because of the good guidance that is provided. For example work with individuals and their families has brought about good reductions in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

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
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management are currently satisfactory overall but are improving.

With the clear direction that has been provided by the headteacher, leaders are becoming clear about their whole-school roles in securing improved rates of progress for all pupils. The school's self-evaluation processes have recently been improved and are largely accurate and governors are better informed to offer more challenge to the school. A more effective system has been introduced to monitor the performance of the school and increase accountability at all levels. Governors are committed to supporting the work of the school and because they have been provided with much better information recently

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are aware of where most improvement is needed. There is scope to provide training to develop further their involvement in the strategic development of the school and in ensuring that they challenge more robustly the work of the school.

There is a sharper focus on holding teachers to account for the progress of the pupils in their care. As a consequence, any underperformance is identified promptly and strategies are put in place to help pupils to catch up and promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Although relatively recent in their development, there are clear signs that across the school pupils' progress is improving. A weakness is that there is insufficient moderation of teachers' assessment to ensure that they are always accurate. Middle leaders are being supported satisfactorily to develop a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities and their leadership capacity is improving. However, at present not all middle leaders and managers have been trained sufficiently so that they can consistently make a full contribution to the drive for improvement. Most parents and carers support the school and recognise that changes are taking place for the better. However, some remain concerned about the progress that their children are making and there are anxieties about the behaviour of pupils. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were satisfactory and met all requirements. The school promotes community cohesion appropriately and has correctly identified where more work is needed to develop pupils' understanding of the diverse nature of Britain today. Effective links with international schools, such as with a school in Sri Lanka, are promoting pupils' understanding of world cultures and global citizenship.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Nursery staff ensure that children are welcomed into a warm, caring and attractive environment, both inside and outdoors. Children have many opportunities to learn and

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have fun through first-hand experiences. Historically, children joined the Nursery with skills that were typical for their age but in recent years this has changed and their skills on entry are now below what are typical. Children make sound progress in all the areas of learning during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Outdoor activities give children good opportunities to explore, investigate and consolidate learning. The basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are appropriately provided for. However, the provision for the development of numeracy skills is underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are used to track children's progress and inform the planning of the activities that are made available to them.

The Early Years Foundation Stage staff are led by an enthusiastic leader who ensures that all statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. The effectiveness and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory as is the provision overall. Having gone through a period of significant change with regard to the staffing, every effort is being made by the new team of staff to improve provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of priorities and areas which need improvement. Some developments are already proving to be effective; for example, daily phonics teaching is already improving children's language skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are generally supportive of the school and acknowledge the care provided for their children. However, around a quarter indicates concerns about pupils' behaviour. The inspectors followed this up in detail, including discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of behavioural records. Parents may be reassured to know that the inspection concluded that behaviour is satisfactory and improving. Some examples of good and exemplary behaviour were observed in lessons and around the school and playground behaviour was good overall. Where the small amount of classroom behaviour and attitudes to learning were less than satisfactory this related directly to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly the appropriateness of tasks set for pupils and the amount of time they were expected to listen to their teachers. A similar proportion of parents indicated that their views and suggestions are not taken into account. The school has procedures in place to canvass the views and some parents that inspectors spoke to valued the 'open door' policy of the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodthorpe 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 405 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	44	56	46	10	8	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	30	78	64	7	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	16	80	66	19	16	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	25	73	60	15	12	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	17	91	75	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	16	78	64	17	14	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	23	75	61	14	11	2	2
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)	32	26	67	55	9	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	16	81	66	13	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	11	68	56	22	18	11	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	11	73	60	23	19	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	16	13	84	69	10	8	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	27	70	57	15	12	2	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodthorpe Primary School, York, YO24 2RU

Thank you all so much for all of the help you gave my colleagues and me when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you to find out about how well you are doing.

We talked to teachers, looked at your work and at your recent assessments and we could see that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Many of you told us that you are pleased with the improvements that have started since your new headteacher started at the school. The progress that you make is satisfactory overall, but it varies from year to year and you tend to make better progress in English than in mathematics. Our judgment is that the progress you make could be better, particularly in mathematics. Some lessons are better than others and we would like more of your lessons to be good. We have also asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that teachers with special responsibilities for different subjects get better at judging your work and progress and helping other teachers to make your school better.

I know that you will want to do your bit to help to improve Woodthorpe Primary and you will be able to do this by working as hard as you can for all of your teachers. It would also be lovely and much better for you if more of you choose to eat fresh fruit at break times rather than crisps.

Yours sincerely

Amraz Ali

Her Majesty's Inspector

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