

Woodham Burn Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109302
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	356518
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bede Feechan
Headteacher	Mrs Riannon Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2007
School address	Humphrey Close Newton Aycliffe County Durham DL5 4EX
Telephone number	01325 300230
Fax number	01325 318009
Email address	r.rowe100@durhamlearning.net

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed 12 class teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, talked to the Chair of the Governing Body on the telephone and spoke to staff and groups of pupils. They analysed 112 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at: pupils' progress and achievement data; intervention and support programmes; documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils; school policies; and plans for improving the quality of learning. They scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the local authority's improvement partner to discuss her reports.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and the rate of progress made by all groups of pupils, including boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching and its effectiveness in accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement and attainment, especially in writing.
- The effectiveness of senior leadership in bringing about and sustaining the school's improvement and enhancing the outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

Woodham Burn is larger than the average primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage, with none who speaks English as an additional language. The school is part of a national pilot scheme which enables all pupils to have access to a free school meal. Over one third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a lower than average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The on-site pre-school provision, funded by the town council, and the privately run before-school, after-school and holiday provision are subject to separate inspections and each will receive their own inspection report. The school has gained the International School award and achieved Healthy School status.

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

2

Main findings

Woodham Burn is a satisfactory school which is effectively accelerating the rate of progress pupils make in their learning. This is because the headteacher has taken concerted action and established a strong focus on improving the quality of learning and galvanising staff commitment to achieving this ambition. There is now an increasingly consistent focus on getting the best out of pupils of all abilities and needs. Parents and carers are very positive about their children's experiences. One parent summed up the views of many by writing, 'My child loves going to school and always comes home telling us what he has learnt each day'. The vast majority are especially appreciative about how safe their children are kept.

Most children enter Reception Year with skills and experience below, and often well below, the levels expected for their age. Typically, many have weaknesses in speech and language. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been below average for many pupils in the past although many current Year 6 pupils are now reaching broadly average levels on some of their work. This is the result of the senior leaders' intensive action to improve the quality of learning; for example, writing skills have been significantly improved. Pupils' progress over time is satisfactory, with unmistakable indications that the rate of progress is getting steadily stronger and achievement is rising. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities sometimes make uneven progress, but it is satisfactory overall. As intervention and support is increasingly more effective and well-targeted, variations are being eliminated. While a large majority of lessons observed contained at least good features, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. For example, not all questioning probes pupils' thinking and understanding sufficiently. Explanations are not always demanded. Pupils' behaviour is generally good and continually improving as pupils are taught to reflect on the consequences of their actions. Occasionally, the effective behaviour management systems now in place are not fully exploited to ensure that pupils develop greater self-control. This particularly applies to boys. There remains scope to use active approaches even more imaginatively to inspire and challenge thinking and ensure pupils continuously apply their skills. Increasingly, assessment information is used well to plan activities but marking, although positive and constructive, sometimes lacks the detailed guidance to help pupils to improve. Good personal development prepares pupils well for life in the diverse world around them.

The headteacher displays much determination in her drive to eliminate underperformance and underachievement. Rigorous systems are in place to check pupils' progress and development, and the school's self-evaluation is increasingly effective. As a consequence, strengths and areas for improvement are accurately identified. The governing body is both reflective and challenging. The developing richness of learning reflects the growing confidence and skills of middle leaders. As a result, the school has good capacity to sustain its improvements.

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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?

- Accelerate the rates of pupils' progress and improve their achievement even further by:
 - raising staff expectations of what pupils, especially the boys, can achieve and how they can manage their own behaviour in lessons
 - ensuring that all activities are active, engaging and challenging and allow pupils to apply their skills, particularly in writing, across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is inspiring and exciting, refining the existing good practice by:
 - ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged to justify their ideas and opinions and explain their solutions
 - providing well-defined steps for further improvement to accelerate continuously the rate of progress and boost the achievement of all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory over time. Currently, they are improving as a consequence of better-quality learning. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that pupils of all abilities and needs are learning well at present. Many of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach broadly average attainment in much of their work. More pupils are expected to reach higher levels. This is the result of intensive action since the last inspection to improve the richness and quality of learning. More imaginative ways are used to provide a better match of activities to individual needs. Increasingly, lessons are more engaging and stimulating, enabling underachievement to be systematically eradicated. Thought and care is taken to capture and maintain pupils' interest throughout the lesson. However, not all opportunities are exploited fully for pupils to apply their skills in different situations; boys' writing is underdeveloped.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and provides a firm focus on encouraging pupils to respect difference and reflect on the consequences of their actions. Almost all pupils feel safe and they are happy and cheerful around school. They thrive on responsibility and are rightly proud of their contribution to school decision-making and improvement. For example, they have established activity areas outdoors and suggested lunchtime menu improvements. They understand the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle and keeping active and fit. Pupils report that they feel safe and are taught how to manage risk, such as when riding a cycle on a road. Pupils report that bullying is unusual and the sharp fall in exclusions demonstrates their willingness to consider the feelings of others and think through their actions. Older pupils display responsible and considerate attitudes, such as when acting as buddies to younger children.

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

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	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 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	2

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?

Although satisfactory overall, there is an increasing frequency of good teaching as staff's confidence, skills and talents are developed. When lessons are more active, probing questions are used to challenge pupils' thinking. Assessment information is used effectively to pinpoint gaps in learning and to match activities to individual need, so pupils learn well. For example, pupils were observed totally absorbed when devising a fair test to muffle an alarm clock with a variety of materials. In those lessons where learning is satisfactory rather than good, activities are not so carefully fine-tuned to meet the different needs of pupils. An absence of variety or too much time spent on the same task, such as in paired reading, sometimes leads to pupils losing interest and becoming restless. The increasing use of assessment to personalise learning is enhancing the quality of intervention and support for pupils of all abilities, although not all have a clear sense of exactly what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is an increasingly good match to the pupils' personal needs and interests. Developing use of imaginative approaches linking subjects together is improving pupils' motivation to learn and the ability to think for themselves. This is all adding to the levels of pupils' enjoyment. For example, they manage the school allotment and look after the rabbits. Activities designed to develop pupils' personal skills and to enhance their experiences are being systematically and quickly improved. Examples include a residential week at Robinwood in Cumbria and learning to speak French.

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Good care, guidance and support provide effective help and encouragement for all pupils. This includes those pupils in challenging circumstances and those potentially vulnerable. This is a developing school strength, successfully helping to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. The good links with specialist support agencies and the positive engagement of families make a valuable contribution to raising achievement, reducing persistent absence and improving behaviour. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the regular meetings with staff to discuss their child's development and to help to set their targets.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The desire, drive and high aspirations of the headteacher are playing a fundamental part in the school's good improvement. All the staff and the governing body share a determination to promote better achievement for pupils. Past underachievement, variations in the patterns of progress and inappropriate behaviour are being tackled successfully. Assessment of pupils' development is accurate, because pupils' development is checked rigorously. This helps establish clear planning priorities. Middle leaders are increasingly confident in their role and are committed to sustaining improvements.

Relationships with parents and carers are good and they are progressively more involved in supporting their children's learning and development. The revitalised governing body plays an active part in shaping the strategic direction of the school. Good partnerships with support agencies, local authority services and local schools add to the quality of learning. For example, the school uses the expertise of the music tuition service to develop pupils' creative talents. The school adopts good procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment which meet requirements and include secure checks on all adults. Community cohesion is promoted well with good provision to broaden pupils' understanding of other beliefs and cultures. Equality of opportunity is positively promoted. The accelerating progress and rising achievement for pupils of all backgrounds demonstrates the school's commitment to ensure that all pupils are equally involved and share the same happy experiences to achieve their full potential.

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

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Young children make a confident start in their happy, friendly and stimulating environment. They settle quickly because of the really good care that they receive. Skills and experience on arrival are below, and often well below, that typical for their age, with speech and language development a particular weakness. Most children make good progress and most are working towards the goals expected of them for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Activities are well planned to enable children to pursue their curiosity, for example building their own space station. Children are happy to lead their own learning, although opportunities are sometimes missed to exploit their confidence to manage their own exploring and investigating. Adult questioning prompts children's learning well, such as when they are assembling their own collage of different types of pea and bean and are questioned about the properties of each. Positive links with parents and carers support children's learning effectively, for example sharing family experiences. Although initial sounds and letter recognition are practised well, there are times when activities are too protracted and do not consistently consolidate early reading and writing. Welfare requirements are met well, ensuring that all children are kept safe. Behaviour is good with children developing considerate attitudes towards each other. Consequently, children relate well to adults and develop good friendships with their classmates. Regular observations of children's learning are thorough and well-recorded. Assessments of children's development are increasingly accurate. The on-going improvements in provision, both outdoors and indoors, reflect the ambition of good leadership and management.

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

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Well over a third of all parents and carers returned the questionnaire with their views of the school. This is above the national average level of returns. These views were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of experiences that the school provides and the enjoyment their children get from school. Almost all parents and carers appreciate that their children are kept safe. The inspectors' findings support these views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good and saw some sensible and considerate behaviour from pupils of all ages, in lessons, at play and in assemblies. They observed teachers dealing effectively with minor incidents of immature behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodham Burn Community 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 262 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	60	37	33	5	4	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	64	57	42	38	1	1	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	58	52	50	45	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	49	46	41	7	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	57	51	47	42	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	48	42	38	10	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	44	56	50	4	4	0	0
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)	39	35	53	47	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	46	49	44	9	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	40	40	36	10	9	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	36	52	46	9	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	46	41	51	46	8	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	49	44	39	7	6	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 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 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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodham Burn Community Primary School, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4EX

I want to thank you all for the friendly welcome that you gave the other inspectors and me when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time talking to you.

Woodham Burn is a satisfactory and improving school, which has a number of strengths. Your school enjoys good relationships with your parents and carers and has made certain that school staff work closely with agencies to improve your learning. We were pleased by your sensible and responsible behaviour and the good care taken of you. You obviously feel safe and happy because of this. You understand well the benefits that a healthy lifestyle can bring. You take much pride helping the school to improve and enthusiastically join in all school activities. Some of you told us that your teachers make much of your learning fun. Your school is taking very positive action to improve and this can be seen in your faster progress and improving skills.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to look at more ways of helping you to improve your work and make even faster progress. We want all your teachers to make your work even more challenging, expect you to work even harder, concentrate for longer and be able to explain your ideas and answers. We have asked that your lessons are made even livelier and more interesting, which will help you to achieve more. We have also asked senior leaders to make certain that you are given clear advice as to how you can improve your work.

You can play your part by working as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead Inspector

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