

Woodham Ley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114795
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	366792
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mills
Headteacher	Dave Walton
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2010
School address	Rushbottom Lane Benfleet SS7 4DN
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector observed twelve lessons taught by six teachers and held discussions with a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, members of the teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's plan for raising achievement, data about pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring information, records related to safeguarding, and samples of pupils' work.

The inspector reviewed the school's progress since the last inspection and the previous monitoring visit and looked in detail at the following key areas.

- How effective are teachers in using assessment information and ensuring that they provide challenge for all groups of pupils?
- How effective are teachers in ensuring that pupils know how to assess and improve their own work?
- How effectively are leaders and managers monitoring the school's performance in order to bring about sustainable improvements without the local authority's support?

Information about the school

This is a small primary school. A few of its pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but none of these are in the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties and a few have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that have an adverse impact on their learning. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises The Woodham Tots Nursery, managed by the school, which children attend for the morning session, and a Reception class.

The school was placed into special measures in January 2010. The monitoring inspector visited the school in May and November 2010 and in March 2011 to evaluate the school's progress. There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection.

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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Woodham Ley Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Under the good direction of the headteacher, the school has strengthened its capacity to improve. The governing body has rapidly gained the skills necessary to monitor the school's effectiveness and to hold it to account for its actions. Despite the high turnover of teaching staff, teachers are developing their roles as leaders and managers. Accountability at all levels is much improved.

From starting points that are in line with national expectations when children join the Nursery class, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In Year 6, pupils make rapid progress. This is because of consistently good or better teaching and the positive impact of a wide range of strategies to boost their performance. Standards are rising throughout the school. The school's performance in the most recent national tests in Year 6 is better than last year and is likely to be significantly better than national results when these data become available.

Improvements to teaching have been brought about through changes in staffing together with a sustained focus on monitoring, training and coaching. Lessons are increasingly effective in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, although teaching remains inconsistent. There is some good teaching, and there are good features in all lessons. All of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. Teachers relate well to their pupils, explain tasks clearly, and increasingly provide tasks that capture pupils' imaginations, but expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. In instances when all pupils have the same task, teachers miss opportunities to ensure good levels of individual challenge and do not give pupils precise enough criteria, matched to their abilities, for them to judge their success. In all lessons, learning objectives are shared with pupils, but sometimes these are not worded in 'child-friendly' language and are too difficult for some pupils to understand. On occasions, teachers direct pupils' work too closely, and this limits opportunities for them to develop independence as learners.

The inconsistency in provision extends to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The assessments of children's achievements are clear, but rarely contain information about the next steps needed to develop learning further. Planning in both classes ensures a good coverage of all required areas, but in the Reception class, it does not focus clearly enough on the intended learning.

The school has rightly placed a very strong focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. In order to ensure that pupils' performance in these subjects was closely scrutinised and to identify underachievement at an early stage, the headteacher

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introduced an effective system for tracking pupils' progress. This is now underpinned by teachers' increasingly accurate assessments of pupils' attainment. The time taken to bring about these essential improvements has meant that there has been limited development in other subjects. This is now changing. Work is in progress to provide greater interest and enjoyment for pupils by combining a number of subjects within topics. At present, there is no system for detailed tracking of pupils' achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This makes it difficult for teachers to keep a close check on the development of pupils' skills within the subjects that comprise each of the topics. The school has recently installed a new and well-equipped information and communication technology (ICT) suite. However, opportunities for pupils to use ICT in class remain limited.

Pupils make good progress in developing personal and social skills, thus providing a climate within which learning can take place. Behaviour is good and, in very closely supervised situations, it is impeccable. Pupils appreciate the school's welcoming, safe and supportive environment and say they are well cared for and feel secure. One pupil summed this up succinctly when commenting, 'This is always a nice place to be'. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe and healthy. Their understanding of the way of life of children in other countries is limited.

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?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers focus clearly on the skills to be developed in lessons, make learning intentions clear to pupils, and set tasks that always provide the correct level of challenge
 - all adults working with pupils place a greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills as independent learners.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that pupils use ICT as a day-to-day tool in their learning
 - extending the good systems for tracking pupils' progress to all subjects
 - giving pupils a wider perspective of other cultural traditions.
- Develop greater consistency in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes by:
 - focusing strongly on the intended learning when planning activities
 - ensuring that assessments also provide a focus on the next steps to be taken in developing children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils comment on how much the school has improved over the past year or more and say that they thoroughly enjoy the experiences provide for them. The significant improvement in attendance is testimony to this. From a situation in May 2010 when 20%

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of the pupils had attendance rates below 90%, attendance is now securely within the national 'above average' benchmark.

The school has focused strongly on ensuring that pupils in Year 6 are well equipped for the next stage of their education in terms of their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Observations in lessons and evidence from the work completed by these pupils show that they read and write confidently and calculate accurately. They use these skills well when tackling challenges in other subjects. For example, in a science lesson their skills in note taking helped them plan an investigation into the effect of air resistance on the time taken for a spinner to fall to the ground. In Year 5, pupils' lower-than-average attainment in writing and mathematics is a legacy of previous underachievement that the school is steadily addressing. Progress in this year group is good in reading and satisfactory in writing and mathematics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their specific needs are clearly identified, and appropriate support is provided. For instance, pupils with identified difficulties in motor-control attend twice-weekly 'gym trail' sessions before school. Careful analysis of difficulties in spelling, for example, enables extra help to be precisely targeted at the areas of need. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language sometimes need help in developing their understanding and extending their vocabulary. As with provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, this support is largely provided by five skilled learning support assistants.

Pupils' enthusiasm for the wide range of sporting activities demonstrates their clear understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. This is further enhanced by the strong focus placed on healthy eating. During the inspection, one of the pupils' entries in a catering challenge was served for lunch. 'Le Potter Delice', a Harry Potter themed meal, was greatly enjoyed by the pupils. The 'Grow Global' gardening club is well attended and recently won an award in a local authority competition. Pupils in Year 6 feel that they are really making a difference by taking on responsibilities as prefects or play leaders. However, the impact of pupils on the local community is less evident. Pupils' good moral and social development is securely underpinned by the 'Woodham Way' code, which sets out very clear expectations for conduct.

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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	3
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	2
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 proportion of good teaching is not yet high enough to promote consistently good progress, and the school relies on carefully targeted support for individual pupils to help boost attainment. Teachers' calm and supportive approach to managing their pupils is a consistent feature in all lessons. Good use is made of 'learning walls' which provide useful reference points for pupils in tackling the tasks set for them. However, in some lessons teachers place more emphasis on the content of the tasks than the skills that pupils need to use to be successful in achieving the learning objectives. Work is underway to help improve pupils' skills in thinking for themselves and exploring different options, but this is not always completely successful because some pupils still depend too much on adults for help when they are stuck.

The curriculum is enriched by a number of after-school activities, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. These are greatly appreciated by pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their visit to the 'Crucial Crew' and the 'Bikeability' classes provided at school by a local sports college, which helped develop their understanding of how to keep safe. The school recognises the need to broaden pupils' horizons in terms of their global perspective and sees this as one of the key developments needed within the curriculum.

The school is a caring community in which the individual needs of every pupil are very well understood. Good-quality support is given to those whose circumstances make them

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potentially vulnerable. There are well-established and effective arrangements to induct pupils into school and ensure a smooth transition to the secondary phase of education.

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 headteacher has been the driving force behind the school's improvement. He has made clear to staff his expectations of the improvement required, and there is a shared understanding of the need to raise standards further. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly, but records do not provide a sharp enough focus on the impact of teaching on pupils' acquisition of skills and knowledge. One of the headteacher's important achievements has been the school's improved partnership with parents and carers. As a result, they have given their support despite the school being subject to special measures. This partnership has helped improve attendance and punctuality. The school ensures that parents are kept well informed about school events and their children's progress. Family learning sessions help improve their understanding of ways in which they can support their children's learning. The school has a good understanding of the needs of its community. It satisfactorily promotes pupils' understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom but concedes weaknesses in its promotion of a global context. Strong partnerships with other schools and professional agencies help enrich provision. At the time of the inspection, for example, the school nurse was supporting the school's provision for health education.

This is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and which gives pupils a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity. Careful monitoring informs the school's actions. The governing body is much better informed than it was at the time of the last inspection. Training is on-going as the governing body moves towards becoming fully independent in holding the school to account. The premises are secure. Records of the checks carried out on all adults who have regular contact with pupils were closely scrutinised and found to meet all requirements.

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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	3
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	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	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

By the time children leave Reception, the large majority attain the expected learning goals. Milestones in children's development are carefully recorded in both the Nursery and Reception classes. These assessments provide clear evaluations of children's gains in learning, but do not give a clear indication of what needs to be learned next. All adults place a high priority on ensuring the well-being of the children. They have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide themed activities that capture their imaginations. In most cases, these are of better quality in Nursery than in Reception. For example, a seaside theme provided extra interest and enjoyment through role play as children made choices from the menu at the Seaside Cafe or served 'ice creams'. A recent visit by staff from a local country park helped promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them as they explored the school grounds in search of minibeasts. All areas of learning are covered satisfactorily and there is a sound balance between opportunities for learning through play and direct teaching, both indoors and out. In Nursery, children make particularly good progress in their personal and social development because of the way in which activities are carefully planned to promote these important skills. They quickly adapt to routines, share resources amicably, respect others and behave well. In the Reception class, some of the teaching is more formal than is normally found. Leadership provides satisfactory direction.

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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 views of parents and carers were not surveyed. However, the school reports an improved level of parental satisfaction with provision and pupils' achievements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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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.



14 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodham Ley Primary School, Benfleet, SS7 4DN

As many of you know, I have been visiting your school each term to check on how well it is getting on. This is because an inspection in 2010 decided that your school needed something called 'special measures'. This means that it needed lots of extra help to get better. I am pleased to tell you that your school has improved a lot and it no longer needs special measures. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that it is doing right and some things that still need to be improved.

Some of the best things about your school are that you behave well and are good at looking after each other. You told me that you feel safe because the staff take good care of you. You know a lot about how to stay healthy, and you told me how much you enjoyed your Harry Potter lunch. Your attendance has improved and is now good. Well done! This is important.

To help you to make better progress, I have asked your teachers to make sure that you clearly understand what you have to do in lessons. The work they give you always needs to make you think hard, and help you to become more independent. I am sure that you are ready for these challenges! Your headteacher knows that one of the next important jobs is to plan more exciting topics for you to enjoy. This includes helping you learn more about how children live in other countries. I really like your new ICT suite, and you told me that you do too. Your school now needs to make sure that you use computers a lot more in your lessons. When adults check on how well those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes are getting on with your work, they also need to write down what they think would be the best thing for you to do next. The plans for lessons in the Reception class need to be a bit better.

I would like you all to play your part in helping the school to improve. The best way for you to do this is to always pay careful attention to what your teachers ask you to do and try your best to work on your own when your teachers ask you to do this. I would also like to thank you for making me feel so welcome. This is because everyone at your school is very friendly. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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