

# Woodlands Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104990
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	377153
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	312
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne McNeill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Lindfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hollybank Road Birkenhead CH41 2SY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed involving 13 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and several parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, planning and school policies, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. The team analysed 89 questionnaires returned by parents or carers, and also those returned by staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are doing and what their attainment is like as they move into Year 1.
- What achievement is like in Key Stage 1.
- Why are the standards that pupils attain in English are lower than in mathematics in Key Stage 2?
- How effective the school's leadership has been in promoting community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school. A large majority of pupils is White British. Just under one third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Most of these have Bengali as their home language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Approximately one third of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities and this figure is above average. The school runs before- and after-school clubs that are part of this inspection. The school's many awards include The Basic Skills Quality Mark, The International Schools' Award, the Northwest Inclusion Award and Healthy Schools 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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The school provides a good education for pupils. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6 and this constitutes good progress for pupils given the low starting points of many when they join the Nursery classes. A trend in recent years has been for standards in mathematics in Year 6 to be above average, which is higher than in English. The school has introduced measures to close this gap that are beginning to make a difference, although their full impact has not yet been assessed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress owing to the effective support they receive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities frequently make excellent progress. Outstanding elements of the provision are the curriculum and care, guidance and support.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start owing to good teaching. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, the large majority of teaching is good. Generally, teachers assess pupils' progress well and use it to group pupils according to their level of attainment effectively. The quality of marking in Key Stage 2 is very good in some classes but inconsistent in others. The curriculum is extremely well tailored to the needs of pupils with an emphasis on respecting the rights of others and global awareness as well as providing excellent support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The high quality of care, guidance and support is much appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers. The school consistently makes extra efforts to help those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable or those new to the local community. As a result, the school is a very harmonious place for pupils to experience. Relationships and behaviour are good and levels of attendance are average and rising. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding.

All aspects of leadership and management are good and some features are outstanding. The school's links with parents and carers are excellent and staff are highly effective in reaching out to provide support. The school is highly successful in promoting equal opportunity for all and its impact on supporting positive relationships among the local community and with schools beyond is excellent. The headteacher and strong senior leadership team drive forward improvement well. The governing body makes a good contribution to decision-making and challenges the senior leadership team well. All aspects of school self-evaluation are good, for instance the rigorous analysis of pupils' performance. Since the previous full inspection, the school has maintained its overall quality and improved provision and

leadership and management. Consequently, the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the drive to raise standards in English to match those in mathematics by:
  - monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of recent strategies the school has introduced to promote pupils' skills of reading and writing.
- Take steps to ensure the quality of teaching across all classes is at least good or better by:
  - ensuring that the work planned for different levels of attainment in classes is carried out in practice
  - raising the pace of pupils' learning so that it is consistently good in all lessons
  - sharing the best practice which is evident in some year groups in the marking of pupils' work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils enjoy school and achieve well. They cooperate with one another in lessons and enjoy rising to a challenge. For example, pupils in Year 5 were motivated well to crack a code in their mathematics lesson by carrying out various number operations. Most pupils concentrate and listen well and they are confident in answering questions and giving opinions. Pupils at the very early stages of speaking English as an additional language benefit hugely from the bilingual skills of teaching assistants. As a result, their achievement and enjoyment of learning are never less than good and at times outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent strides in their learning. This is the result of high-quality provision, led by two highly effective coordinators and involving very capable teaching assistants. Progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 has improved in the last year and is now good. The school is rigorous in identifying trends in the performance of different groups of pupils, such as boys compared with girls, or those known to be eligible for free school meals with those who are not. Nothing of concern has emerged.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and live a fit and healthy lifestyle. Their behaviour is good and the few who display challenging behaviour are dealt with well by staff. A key feature of the school is the harmonious nature of relationships among pupils, regardless of their individual need or ethnic background. Pupils are well equipped for secondary school, not only because they have the expected literacy and numeracy skills, but also they have important personal qualities of tolerance and a keen aspiration to do well. These qualities have been promoted through courses they have taken in business enterprise and citizenship. Pupils' punctuality is good. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school, through the work of the school council and their many roles as monitors. They have a good awareness of environmental issues and a strong commitment to charity collection

and Fairtrade activities. Their impact on decisions about developing amenities in the local community has been pronounced.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The strengths of the teaching include the warm relationships between staff and pupils and the excellent contribution made by teaching assistants, for example those who are bilingual and those working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The knowledge and expertise of staff are particularly strong. However, there are a few inconsistencies preventing learning from being better in a very small minority of lessons. For example, the pace of learning dips where pupils are kept for too long altogether listening to their teacher. Staff generally use assessment information well to plan work appropriate to the levels of attainment of pupils and to offer helpful feedback. On occasions, plans are not fully carried out in practice. Marking, which is of high quality in Years 5 and 6, is more variable in some year groups.

The school has developed a highly relevant curriculum which encourages pupils' wider understanding and aspirations. This is evident in its innovative approach to respect for everyone's rights, the expectations behind the 'Going for Gold' programme, and the global partnerships established across the world. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the curriculum. There is a clear focus on developing harmony among all pupils. In addition, there are many opportunities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to excel. Links between subjects are very well established. There is a rich range of activities and visits outside lessons for pupils to enjoy.

There is excellent targeted support for pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. The school's nurture class led by the learning mentor is a highly effective way of calming those pupils who find it difficult from time to time to cope in lessons. There is also practical support for parents and carers. Procedures to

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

promote good attendance and punctuality are effective. The school works closely with local community groups to reduce the impact of families taking extended holidays. There are very popular before- and after-school clubs that provide an excellent start and end to the day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have developed a team approach to curricular and other developments so that all staff feel fully involved in decision making. Staff are very appreciative of the opportunities for professional development they receive. This means teaching assistants, such as those with responsibility for minority ethnic groups, feel fully confident in their roles. As a result of very rigorous analysis of pupils' performance, the school knows how it is performing and tackles key areas for development well. School development planning focuses closely on improving performance and provision. The governing body contains good community representation so that the school's links with the community benefit significantly. It provides a good level of challenge to the senior leadership team.

All aspects of safeguarding, such as staff expertise and rigorous record-keeping, are good and reflect the high quality of care found in the school. Outstanding elements of the leadership and management are the exceptional links with parents and carers as well as those with local primary schools and secondary schools. The school has been designated as a 'hub' for its provision for minority ethnic groups and this means other local schools regularly draw upon its expertise. The school's measures to tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunity are at the heart of its work and are extremely effective. Leaders have an excellent understanding of how different groups of pupils are performing and ensure that all make good or better progress. Effective measures are being taken to close rapidly the attainment gap between English and mathematics. The school's promotion of community cohesion is also outstanding. The emphasis on developing pupils' global awareness and their respect for the rights of others is exceptional. Pupils are kept very well informed about children in other countries through news sheets, assemblies, topic work and direct links with schools overseas. This leads to well-rounded young people when they move on to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The good quality provision and outcomes for children found at the previous inspection have been maintained. Children at the very early stages of speaking English as an additional language reap great benefit from the support provided by a bilingual teaching assistant. At the time of the inspection, the children were settling in and already a calm, purposeful and enjoyable environment for learning was very evident. All adults in the class support the children’s development very well. Children are learning the routines of the Nursery well and particularly enjoy the excellent play resources available outdoors. The development of early skills of literacy is slower than in other areas of development. By the time the children reach Year 1, many are still working towards the early learning goals in the key areas of communication, language and literacy. Nevertheless, this constitutes good progress given their low starting points. The quality of teaching is good and all adults rigorously assess how the children are progressing so that they have a thorough knowledge of each child. Leadership and management are good. All staff work well together as a team and the forthcoming handover of responsibility on the retirement of the current leader is being managed very effectively. Resources are plentiful but their condition is variable and some require replacement. A key strength of the provision is the support for parents and carers through one-to-one assistance and courses that are often led by teaching assistants. This builds strong links from the outset and means that parents and carers are fully involved in supporting their children’s learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express very strong support for the work of the school. They particularly value the way the school reaches out to them. The support provided prompted one parent to comment that ‘the school is more like a family with the headteacher as the mum.’ The work of the learning mentor is highly appreciated by parents and carers not just for her work with children but with themselves in the form of workshops and individual support in times of difficulty. The work of the bilingual teaching assistants is also much appreciated in helping parents and carers to feel welcome in school. They report that their children enjoy school and they feel they are kept well informed about how their children are doing. These views mirror



the findings of inspectors. A very few parents and carers made individual written criticisms that were followed up by the team but no shared issues emerged.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodlands 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 312 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	63	29	33	0	0	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	57	64	29	33	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	58	26	29	5	6	4	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	58	31	35	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	64	72	20	22	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	64	26	29	1	1	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	57	32	36	0	0	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)	31	35	44	49	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	54	36	40	1	1	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	55	34	38	2	2	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	49	39	44	0	0	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	56	63	29	33	0	0	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	67	26	29	0	0	3	3

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 October 2011

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Birkenhead, CH41 2SY**

It was a great pleasure to inspect your school. You were all extremely friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to share with you what we found.

Your school is providing you with a good education. Your behaviour is good and we were impressed with how well you get on with one another. Your awareness of how to keep safe is good. You take on responsibilities extremely well and we were very impressed with the work of the school council, play leaders, eco-monitors and others. You make good progress and some of you make excellent progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, most of you reach the standards expected in English and mathematics. This is because the teaching you receive is generally good and you work hard. School leaders and the governing body do a good job. They have put together an outstanding curriculum for you to follow, which means you understand a lot about different countries and people. There are excellent opportunities for you to learn about the wider world of work and what it means to be a good citizen. The staff take excellent care of you all and make absolutely sure you all have the best opportunities possible. They have built up outstanding links with your parents and carers and with local schools and other agencies.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. I have asked staff to:

- check how well they help you to read and write
- make all lessons the best they can be by first, keeping the pace brisk, second, making sure the work is set at a level that is right for the different groups in the class, and third, making the most of marking to help you to make progress.

You can all help by doing your best. Please continue to work hard and enjoy school. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Carruthers,  
Lead inspector

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