

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135136
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	381814
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	559
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Price-Smith
Headteacher	Anne Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	07 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons and observed 19 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, managers, staff and groups of pupils. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies and school development plans. In total 206 parental questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 133 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 30 by school staff.

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

- Whether learning is good enough, focusing on boys' progress English and progress in mathematics generally.
- Whether teaching is consistently good throughout school and caters for pupils' different learning needs.
- Whether leadership and management are effective in sustaining improvements and driving the school forwards.

Information about the school

This school is larger in size than the average primary school and operates on two sites. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average and a slightly lower than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from other heritages. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Most pupils are taught in single age groups but some are in mixed-age classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery, offering part-time places, two Reception classes and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

In recognition of the good work, the school holds the Activemark and Artsmark awards, has Healthy School status and an accreditation for specialised speech and language work.

A resource base within the school supports pupils with auditory difficulties. In partnership with a local special school, a small number of dual placements are provided for pupils who have complex physical or learning needs. Private providers offer childcare before and after school and during holidays, as well as wrap around care for the part-time Nursery children. These childcare facilities are subject to separate inspections and reports.

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

This is a good school. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils, together with outstanding partnerships, lead to some outstanding aspects of pupils' personal development and ensure that individual needs are met. The headteacher, ably assisted by the senior leaders, leads the drive for excellence and generates strong ambition. Pupils' progress is tracked with meticulous care and managers conduct regular observations of teaching and learning in classrooms. This system of self-evaluation provides an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, attainment has been consistently maintained at a significantly above-average level and progress has improved further in mathematics, and for the more-able pupils in English. The capacity for sustained improvement is, therefore, good.

Achievement is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress overall but there are variations in learning and provision between the two age groups. In the Reception classes, progress is good but it is sometimes slower in the Nursery when children have insufficient opportunities for independent work. The outdoor classroom, shared by both groups, offers fewer learning opportunities than the more stimulating indoor environment. Both issues are recognised by leaders but action planning has been too slow and opportunities for staff to share good practice too infrequent. During Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics, and it is often rapid in Year 6. Writing has improved well but progress is slightly slower than in reading. A minority of Key Stage 2 pupils experience difficulties in spelling and handwriting. Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. Tasks are set at different levels of difficulty and lessons include a good amount of practical and collaborative activities.

The school provides outstanding care for pupils and staff seek out expert help or resources where needed, especially for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who are deemed to be potentially vulnerable. The good curriculum links subjects together to make learning meaningful and includes a strong emphasis on the arts. It includes a wide range of intervention strategies and personalised teaching that successfully boosts learning and helps individuals to overcome difficulties. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. Their good behaviour ensures that lessons run smoothly and creates a calm, positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils say they enjoy school, are happy and feel extremely safe. They take on board the

sporting and fitness provision in school with great enthusiasm and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and the consistency of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that provision in the Nursery consistently provides good opportunities for independent work and exploration
 - developing provision in the outdoor area so it offers an equally wide range of learning opportunities as the indoor environment
 - injecting more rigour into action planning for this phase and increasing opportunities for the sharing of best practice between the Nursery and Reception staff.
- Improve progress and attainment in writing, and ensure that issues with spelling and handwriting for some pupils in Key Stage 2 are addressed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils rise to the challenges that their teachers set for them and enjoy learning. In Year 6 lessons, pupils built on research they completed at home to produce persuasive leaflets, employing their communication, writing and organisational skills to the full. They worked quickly and accurately, meeting tight deadlines and setting additional challenges for themselves. Year 1 pupils enjoyed playing with words to make their own versions of Nursery rhymes, demonstrating good creativity. Those in Year 5 made good use of their research work to produce presentations on 'The Planets', combining text, graphics and animations successfully. All age groups have positive attitudes to learning, work hard and achieve well.

When they enter the Nursery, children's skills are in line with expectations for their age, although some have difficulties with speech and language. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and good progress in the Reception Year. On entry to Year 1, children have a secure platform for their National Curriculum work. Progress is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Reading is a strength and a good number of pupils achieve the higher level in this subject and in mathematics. Progress in writing has improved well, especially for the more able, but there is scope to improve some spelling or handwriting for some Key Stage 2 pupils. Teachers have worked successfully to improve boys' writing by choosing texts and topics to fire their imagination. As a result, they are catching up with the girls quickly. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average for the majority. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported so they make good progress. Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs often make excellent progress in their academic and personal development.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is especially good; they are thoughtful, polite and helpful. They understand when friends have specific needs and

take great care to support and involve them fully. Pupils assert that they feel extremely safe and have no worries about bullying. They have a sound knowledge of, and good respect for, faiths and cultures that are different from their own. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. For example, school councillors ensure that pupils' views are represented in the decision-making process, and 'buddies' help to ensure that break and lunchtimes run smoothly. Pupils have a keen awareness of those in the world who are less fortunate and engage enthusiastically in fund-raising activities. They are keen to succeed, have good habits of attendance and punctuality, and are well prepared for their future education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good and there is some excellent practice. Lessons have very clear objectives so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers often include short, focused tasks and challenges into their lessons. This creates a good pace to learning and helps to motivate pupils. In one lesson, for example, pupils acted as contestants in 'The Apprentice', working through a task with very clear criteria and expectations. On a very few occasions, however, pupils sit listening passively to the teacher for too long and lose concentration. Lessons make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning, which results in high attainment and good levels of confidence in this subject. Marking is of a high quality and includes a good amount of praise and encouragement. Pupils study the advice given by their teachers in order to develop their own, individual targets. In turn, these are regularly evaluated so that learning moves on quickly and pupils become independent.

The good curriculum is well balanced. It includes a good emphasis on personal education, as well as varied opportunities for creative and practical work. Pupils especially enjoy their art lessons and learning to play musical instruments. Teachers' planning makes very effective links between subjects and provides good opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils

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

employed their writing, mathematical and physical skills when investigating movement in a science lesson. A major strength of the curriculum lies in the tailoring of tasks and support to meet pupils' specific needs. This provides a good boost for learning when pupils do not reach their expected targets. Staff are currently developing a similar programme to cater for gifted and talented pupils. An excellent programme of extra-curricular clubs and competitive sport helps pupils to hone their skills and encourages them to try new interests.

The school provides an exceptionally warm and welcoming ethos. Pupils who have highly specific needs, or who are potentially vulnerable, are exceptionally well supported by trained and experienced staff, together with outside expertise. Staff go that extra mile to ensure that pupils have the equipment and resources they need to eradicate any potential barriers to learning. An enrichment class provides a respite from the pace of school life as well as specially adapted lessons, tailored to need. Behaviour is good and supported by 'class charters' that are developed by the pupils themselves. As a result, rewards and sanctions are well understood and respected. By the time they reach the top junior classes, pupils show excellent self-discipline and maturity. Although attendance and punctuality are good, there is no complacency in the school. Absence is monitored rigorously and the school is currently working on further reducing the number of days lost due to holidays taken in term time.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides good, focused leadership and clear direction. Teamwork is good and staff are focused on providing the best for pupils. The school is well run on a day-to-day basis; procedures and policies are consistently followed and value for money is good. Staff pay good attention to ensuring that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged, so all have an equal opportunity to succeed. For example, an improved system for tracking pupils' progress means that senior managers have an accurate view of the achievements of all groups of pupils. They use the information well to provide for a wide range of needs, to target support and provide a boost to learning, where needed. Senior leaders keep a close eye on provision and outcomes across the different age groups, taking action where issues are identified. Generally, this helps to promote good continuity of approach in school and to ensure that best practice is celebrated and shared. While this has been partially successful in the Early Years Foundation Stage, some inconsistencies remain.

Community cohesion is successful in promoting harmony in the school and in providing opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community. Safeguarding is good. Staff have regular updates in child protection training and are well equipped to deal with any concerns. Effective procedures that fully meet requirements are

reflected in the day-to-day work of the school. Governance is good. The governing body is supportive and members have a good range of expertise and experience to support the school's management. Members scrutinise data in order to monitor outcomes, have an accurate overview on the quality of teaching and are fully involved in deciding the strategic direction of the school. Their current plans include a more active involvement in extending community cohesion on a national and global level. Parents and carers receive high quality information about progress, the curriculum, and school events. The 'learning links' meetings provide especially good information so that parents and carers are enabled to help their children at home.

These are the grades for the 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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to school, children's skills are in line with those typically expected for their age. Children are enthusiastic to learn and behaviour is good. They take turns and are willing to share resources and ideas. Progress is sound in the Nursery class and accelerates to good in the Reception class. By the time children enter Year 1, many aspects of their development are above average, such as early number and language work. However, early writing and creativity are not as strong. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is often good in the Reception classes where planning takes careful account of children's learning and interests in order to keep them well challenged. Tasks include varied opportunities for children to follow their interests, explore their world and develop independence. In both age groups, progress is especially good when children work in small groups and then engage in activities to apply and consolidate their new skills. In the Nursery, however, too much teaching takes place in larger, mixed-ability groups which reduces opportunities for independent learning.

Leadership and management of this phase are satisfactory. The sharing of expertise and joint planning ensure consistently good provision across the Reception classes, but this does not extend to the Nursery class. The shared outdoor classroom provides good facilities for physical development. However, it does not mirror the full range of learning opportunities provided indoors. A covered area is not used to best effect and the lack of all-weather surfaces restricts the space available on inclement days.

Welfare arrangements meet requirements fully and children are safe. Links with parents and carers are good and children benefit from a smooth introduction to the Nursery class and transition to the Reception classes. Well-attended workshops for parents and carers ensure that they are able to offer good support for their children's learning.

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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have very positive views and an overwhelming majority agree that their child enjoys school. Quotes that reflect these opinions include, 'The teachers are helpful' and 'I am very happy with the school.' There are commendations for the provision that keeps children safe and encourages them to lead healthy lifestyles. Parents and carers feel that the teaching is good and that children's needs are met. Inspection evidence endorses these views. No major issues were raised.

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 206 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 559 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	118	57	83	40	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	116	56	86	42	2	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	78	38	111	54	12	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	89	43	103	50	9	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	112	54	86	42	3	1	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	97	47	94	46	8	4	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	101	49	99	48	4	2	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)	95	46	92	45	7	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	87	42	107	52	7	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	35	110	53	12	6	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	29	123	60	9	4	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	106	51	84	41	5	2	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	125	61	70	34	5	2	1	0

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).

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.



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Ellesmere Port, CH66 2JT

Thank you for the very warm welcome and lovely smiles you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated the interesting conversations we had and all the help you gave us.

Woodlands is a good school. Your behaviour is good and you all get on very well together. You are a credit to yourselves, your families and your school. Thank you to those pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with us. It was good to hear about all your sporting activities and the wide range of clubs, visits and visitors that you enjoy as part of your learning. The adults in school provide you with excellent care so it is not surprising that you feel extremely safe and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy your work and play, and love finding things out for yourselves. However, the outdoor classroom does not provide as many exciting activities as the one indoors, and some of you in the Nursery class do not have enough practical and independent work. In Key Stages 1 and 2, you are making good progress. Your writing has improved but we think it could be even better so we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that those of you in the Nursery class always have lots of practical work and independent activities
- develop more exciting outdoor activities for the Nursery and Reception classes
- improve writing even further and check that those of you in Key Stage 2 have all the help you need with spelling and handwriting.

In addition, the teachers will be checking to see that the improvements in the Nursery and Reception classes are working. You can help by continuing to work hard, completing your homework and being ambitious. Please accept our best wishes for the future and continue to enjoy your happy school.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Read
Lead Inspector

