

Woodside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111125
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	378238
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Wooldridge
Headteacher	Richard Collings
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed ten lessons or parts of lessons involving eight teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a member of the local authority 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 44 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 are different groups of pupils achieving, such as those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and late entrants to school?
- Is the school effective in improving levels of attendance and punctuality?
- Is the quality of teachers' planning good enough so that all pupils are achieving as well as they can?
- How effective is the interim senior leadership team in implementing the plan to raise pupils' achievement?
- Has the Early Years Foundation Stage improved its effectiveness since the time of the previous inspection?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has a seven-place unit for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties from within the school and other schools in the borough. In addition, a high percentage of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2, most of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have been excluded from other schools. The school hosts a privately run, pre-school group on site which is subject to a separate inspection. The school has the Artsmark (Silver) award and Healthy School status. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of headteacher, with an acting headteacher and two acting deputy headteachers in place since September 2011.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress but this varies between different groups of pupils. For example, those pupils at the school the longest achieve better than the many who join the school in Key Stage 2 from other schools and who often have additional needs. Consequently, attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6, has fluctuated since the last inspection. The trend has been upwards, however, and attainment overall is broadly average. This is evident, for example, in the current Year 6. Whereas attainment in reading is in line with the national average, pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics is a little below average.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Those who show challenging behaviour are supported well by all staff to help them to be successful in their learning. Pupils have a good awareness of personal safety and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Levels of attendance have been in line with the national average since the time of the last inspection but dipped last year to well below average. This fall was caused by the poor attendance of a group of persistent, hard-to-reach absentees. Steps have been taken to promote better attendance and punctuality and the outcome is that attendance this term is in line with the national average once again.

The quality of teaching is never less than good in all classes and this is helping to raise attainment. Newly appointed staff are making a good contribution to the quality of teaching and there is a good range of experience and expertise among all staff, including teaching assistants. Because of the wide variety of pupils' needs and the impact of pupils joining the school late, however, pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory overall rather than good. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. Children achieve well and the quality of teaching and learning in the Reception class is good. Care, guidance and support for all pupils are good. A particular strength is the work done to promote the well-being of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. This involves work not only carried out at school but also through effective links with other agencies and with parents and carers.

The new senior leadership team has made a good start in addressing areas of weakness, which have been identified in recent times. With good support from members of the local authority they have begun to implement a plan to raise pupils'

achievement. The outcomes of these steps are yet to be fully realised. The team has begun a planned schedule of monitoring and evaluating provision and attainment but there are aspects of school self-evaluation and the monitoring of performance data that are not yet sharp enough. Consequently, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is judged to be satisfactory.

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?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics by:
 - making best use of other subjects to promote pupils' writing
 - celebrating pupils' writing, for example in displays, to raise pupils' expectations
 - making consistent reference to how pupils might improve when marking their work
 - giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on and respond to teachers' marking
 - making consistent use of assessment to provide challenging work in mathematics pitched at the right level for groups of different attainment in classes.
- Maintain the drive to improve levels of attendance by implementing schemes and initiatives to promote good attendance and punctuality to school.
- Develop the expertise of the senior leadership team in how well they monitor provision and explore assessment information in order to raise pupils' achievement and attainment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most children start in the Reception class with skills that are well below those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average but levels of attainment fluctuate according to the nature of the year group. This constitutes satisfactory achievement overall. Most pupils enjoy lessons and show good levels of attention in class. Children's skills in speaking are often well below expected levels when they start in the Reception Year. With good teaching as they move through the key stages, they become more confident to speak clearly in class and give their opinion in discussions. Pupils present their work neatly and their handwriting is good. They behave well and often share ideas well when they are asked to with a partner. Pupils learn how to work together in teams. By the time they move on to secondary school they have broadly average skills in literacy and numeracy and good attitudes to learning. In general, girls achieve better than boys, following the national trend.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Those at the school the longest often make good progress. There is a high proportion of pupils who join the school late in Years 5 or 6, some of whom have behavioural difficulties and join the school's provision in the designated unit. They

are helped to re-engage with learning and to improve their behaviour. Their academic progress is satisfactory given the short time they are at the school and the previous gaps in their learning. These are often caused by poor attendance or exclusion from their previous school. Their personal development is good. This is illustrated not only by their renewed engagement with school but by comments from their parents and carers who are very complimentary about the work of the school in helping their children.

Pupils take on responsibilities well, such as councillors and play leaders, often helping pupils new to the school or whose speech is indistinct to join in at playtimes. Councillors and other pupils make a good contribution to decision-making, for example, in connection with improving the school grounds and in plans for the forthcoming Mersey road crossing nearby. Pupils regularly raise money for global charities, such as Water Aid and for local causes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3
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:	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in the teaching include how well staff interact with pupils and manage their behaviour. They have good subject knowledge and the ability to enthuse pupils, evident, for example, when Year 4 pupils explored the school environment looking for two-dimensional shapes. The pace of lessons is brisk so that time is used effectively. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to all parts of the lesson. They are skilled practitioners who lead group work very effectively. Lesson planning is generally good and the impact of lessons is regularly reviewed to confirm how well pupils have grasped the skills and knowledge they are learning. Occasionally, however, expectations of what different groups of pupils can achieve are not high enough in mathematics. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and often clearly states what is good about a piece of work. The opportunity to suggest the next steps in learning and for pupils to respond to teachers' marking, however, is sometimes missed.

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

The curriculum is enhanced by good opportunities through themed weeks, visitors to school, residential and other visits out of school, and events such as 'Let's Get Cooking'. There is a wide range of popular after-school activities. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The curriculum enhances basic skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily but opportunities to use subjects, such as history and geography, for writing at length are missed. In addition, classrooms, especially in Key Stage 2, do not have sufficient examples of pupils' writing to provide models of best practice for all pupils.

The school is highly successful in giving pupils who have experienced difficulties in other schools a second chance. The coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well supported by a team of teaching assistants who provide the stable learning environment these pupils need. They help them to regain an interest in learning and re-integrate into mainstream classes. Good links with parents and carers are key elements in the effectiveness of care, guidance and support. In addition, arrangements for the transition into school from the pre-school group on site, and on to nearby secondary schools help pupils to make the moves as smoothly as possible. Procedures, including positive rewards, to promote good attendance and punctuality, are satisfactory. Specific initiatives, for example, 'Spot On' to encourage punctuality during the week of the inspection, are clearly effective and pupils respond well. The impact of these is beginning to be realised in improved attendance figures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	3
The use of assessment to support learning	
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 senior leadership team of acting headteacher, two acting deputies and two key stage managers is working well during this period of change. They have the full support of staff who expressed confidence in the leadership team's approach when they responded to the inspection questionnaire. The plan to raise pupils' achievement has become a central focus for all staff, who feel very much part of the initiative. It is in the early stages of implementation and its outcomes are yet to be realised.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory. A programme of monitoring and evaluating provision to address issues in the improvement plan has begun. The school is becoming more skilled at tracking pupils' progress and assessing how well different groups of pupils are achieving. It promotes equality of opportunity for different groups of pupils and tackles discrimination satisfactorily rather than well because tracking is in the process of becoming more sophisticated and is not yet fully established. In addition, school self-evaluation is not always sharp and is too generous in some of its judgements.

The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge for the senior leadership team. It meets requirements and has a good oversight of finance. A recent initiative for members of the governing body to undertake walks in school with senior leaders to familiarise themselves with practice is helping them to understand strengths and areas to improve. Policy and practice to safeguard the welfare of pupils, including the safe recruitment of staff and child protection procedures, meet requirements and are satisfactory. The school's work in promoting the community in school and the locality is good; its partnerships with other schools and institutions further afield to help raise pupils' awareness of the different ethnic heritages in society today is in the process of development. Overall, the effectiveness of community cohesion is satisfactory.

These are the grades for the 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

Children enjoy coming to school and make good progress in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority reach levels expected of them in personal, social and emotional development. Many are still working towards the early learning goals in early literacy and numeracy skills. A significant number do not speak clearly and the teacher devotes a lot of time to asking children about what they are doing, helping them to improve their speech. The children enjoyed a lesson involving letters and the sounds they make because there was a real emphasis on the fun of finding things out. The variety of activities selected for children to do was particularly successful, prompting one child to say, 'I get bored when I'm playing, but I like this!' The children behave very well and share equipment happily. They understand the importance of washing their hands before eating. They develop good skills of coordination using play equipment.

Provision is good. Staff plan well for a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. They observe the children at work and play and chart their progress accurately. The children are well cared for and the classroom and outdoor areas are planned effectively so that children can be independent in what they choose to do. Leadership and management by the recently appointed teacher are good. She has good vision for how the Early Years Foundation Stage will

develop and receives support and advice when necessary from the Key Stage 1 manager. Links with parents and carers and the pre-school group are very effective in helping the children to feel secure, happy and confident in what they do. Since the last inspection, areas for improvement have been addressed well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

Almost all parents and carers express strong support for the work of the school and confirm that their children enjoy school and that they are happy with their child's experience of the school. The overwhelming majority consider their children are safe in school and are making good progress. They consider the school is helping their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. They are helped to support their child's learning. Inspectors support these positive views while noting that overall pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Parents and carers comment very favourably on the open-door policy the staff have in dealing with them. A very small minority of parents and carers consider the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors find the behaviour policy is carried out very effectively in dealing with challenging behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodside 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 162 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	55	18	41	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	59	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	57	18	41	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	55	19	43	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	61	16	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	59	17	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	50	21	48	1	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)	21	48	21	48	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	61	17	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	57	17	39	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	48	20	45	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	55	20	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	68	14	32	0	0	0	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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodside Primary School, Runcorn, WA7 5YP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning.

We found that Woodside Primary is giving you a satisfactory education. As you move up through the school, you learn and grow together happily. Most of you when you reach Year 6 achieve the level expected for your age in reading but not as many do in writing and mathematics. You are well behaved and polite. You told us that bullying sometimes happens but staff sort it out well. You told us that 'staff always care for us' and they 'help us to stay healthy'. They have been working hard, too, to make sure the quality of teaching is good in order to help you to do as well as possible. We were pleased to see how play leaders and councillors help pupils new to the school to settle in.

We think the acting headteacher and senior staff have made a good start since the beginning of term. To help them in this we have asked them to:

- make sure they do as much as they can to help you with your writing and mathematics, for example, by showing you what you need to do next when they mark your work and by giving you the chance to think about that
- make sure you all attend school regularly and are on time (just as Spotty Dog tells you to!)
- check on how good their teaching is and how you are doing in school subjects so that you can all do your very best.

You can help by continuing to do your best, making sure that you read the comments your teacher makes about your work and that your attendance is good.

With my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Carruthers
Lead inspector

