

The Woodlands Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124159
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380820
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Robey
Headteacher	Michael Dagnan
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They observed an assembly and break times, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at progress records, lesson plans, pupils' work, school policies and improvement plans. They analysed completed questionnaires returned by 28 staff, 169 pupils and 147 parents and carers.

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

- Is enough progress made by girls at Key Stage 1?
- Does teaching provide consistently good challenge in writing across the school and in mathematics at Key Stage 2?
- Do improvement plans and academic targets have sufficient rigour to accelerate progress for all pupils?
- Are there any differences in progress of boys and girls in the Reception classes?

Information about the school

The Woodlands Community is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage, a larger proportion than that found nationally. The remainder come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and none of them speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Since the last inspection the school has experienced a high turnover of staff and several changes to the leadership team.

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

This satisfactory school is improving steadily. In its supportive atmosphere pupils grow into mature and confident young people. Pupils behave well and are polite to adults and to each other. They enjoy all aspects of school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Pupils feel very safe in school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with their child's experience at school. Typically a parent told an inspector: 'Children enjoy school and the staff take good care of them. If there is a problem teachers are keen to help resolve it.' Inspectors' evidence confirms these positive comments.

The unsettled period of high staff turnover and changes to school leadership had a negative impact on pupils' learning and progress. Progress slowed and attainment dropped below national averages. This was especially so for girls at Key Stage 1 and for most pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Now that the school has successfully resolved staffing and leadership issues, pupils' progress has begun to improve. Most pupils are now making the progress that they should and there is evidence of good progress in Years 2 and 4, where there is consistently good teaching. There has been a general improvement in the progress of girls in Key Stage 1, which is now at least satisfactory. Pupils' strongly improving skills at linking letters to the sounds they make, and an interesting and well read stock of books in the library are accelerating standards in reading. Progress in writing is slower than that in reading. This is because the current curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces in subjects other than English and time to practise writing accurate sentences, which are correctly punctuated. In Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in solving problems and their speed and accuracy of mental arithmetic are relatively weak, which means their progress in mathematics is satisfactory rather than good. The curriculum is satisfactory, although it does provide a wide range of enrichment activities, which add to pupils' enjoyment of school and widens their horizons.

In lessons, relationships are positive. Teachers make increasingly good use of resources, such as computers and educational games, to engage pupils and make work interesting and relevant. As a result, pupils are keen to learn. They manage their classes well and interruptions to learning caused by poor behaviour are extremely rare. Teaching is satisfactory overall because it results in generally satisfactory learning and progress over time. Teaching is not yet consistently good because teachers do not always use assessment data effectively to plan work so that all pupils are fully challenged. Additionally, a rapid pace to learning is not always sustained throughout lessons, for example, when introductions last too long. Staff

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use their detailed knowledge of each pupil effectively and pupils feel that they are well supported and cared for.

The headteacher's demanding and clearly articulated targets for the school are shared enthusiastically by the staff. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained the good quality of pupils' personal development and care. Attendance has risen above the national average. Leaders monitor the school's performance regularly and this provides them with largely secure and accurate information for self-evaluation. Their recent successes show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. However, leaders do not ensure enough time is spent sharing the good teaching practice in the school to give staff a clear perception of what good and outstanding progress looks like in different curriculum subjects. In their quest to improve, leaders correctly recognise the need to summarise its wealth of pupil progress data to help pinpoint precisely where improvements are needed in learning.

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?

- Strengthen teaching and learning throughout school by:
 - ensuring that teachers use performance data effectively to plan work that matches pupils' individual needs closely and provides the necessary challenge to secure consistently good progress
 - keeping the pace of learning brisk and ensuring that lesson introductions do not last too long.

- Strengthen curriculum provision for the development of key literacy and numeracy skills by:
 - giving more time to the development of early writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - ensuring that pupils write accurately and at length in subjects other than English
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems and apply mental arithmetic skills in cross-curricular topics.

- Improve the management of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that good and outstanding practice is shared and used as a means of increasing the effectiveness and consistency of teaching as a whole
 - making best use of performance data to identify where further improvement is needed.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

While attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, it remains broadly in line with national expectations. Attainment when pupils leave is average in English and mathematics and is rising. Pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is satisfactory. Although learning is generally satisfactory, some good and outstanding learning was seen during the inspection. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of working out which advertisement was the best value for money. They discussed their ideas in small groups to gain a better understanding of the mathematics involved and to come to an accurate answer. Each pupil worked hard because their targets matched closely their individual needs.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. These pupils often make good progress when they receive individual support but their progress in groups is not as quick, because there are times when individuals remain passive for too long while others complete a task, and their needs are not responded to promptly. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils with behavioural difficulties, for example by ensuring they do not become distracted from their work. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority ethnic backgrounds also make satisfactory progress because staff know these pupils well and check their progress with that of their peers regularly.

The progress of younger girls has improved because teachers are now providing them with work that they find especially interesting, for example they have recently been working on a project on Polar Bears.

Pupils told inspectors they feel very safe in school and that the rare cases of bullying are quickly dealt with. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet and while crossing the road. Pupils do their best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise. Charity collections are generously supported and pupils are keen to take responsibility as house captains and as members of the school council. Pupils are increasingly providing leaders with feedback about their learning, which is, for example, helping to shape changes to the curriculum. Average standards in the basic skills and satisfactory progress means that pupils' preparation for secondary school is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect maturely on their actions and feelings. Their good behaviour is underpinned by a strong moral code and they work productively in teams. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of British culture is satisfactory and improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan work that pupils find relevant and interesting. They use a wide range of teaching styles to sustain pupils' concentration and motivation. For example, pupils regularly discuss their ideas in small groups, which helps them clarify and reinforce their understanding. Progress is not consistently good because there are still times when the pace of learning is too slow or when the work for some groups of pupils does not make sufficient demands on them. Marking and other feedback are improving, especially for pupils in Year 6, who say that they find this process very useful in helping them to understand clearly how they can improve their work.

Health and physical education lessons provide pupils with a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The bright displays of artwork around the school and the number of pupils that enthusiastically play musical instruments exemplify the good provision in the creative and performing arts. The many opportunities for pupils to take part in educational day and residential visits and clubs make a significant contribution to pupils' improved confidence and greatly add to pupils' enjoyment. The school has started to put into place plans to address the shortcomings in the writing and mathematics curriculum. It is too early to judge their effectiveness.

Pupils confidently approach members of staff knowing that any concerns will be quickly resolved. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are accurately assessed and reflected in their individual education programmes. The school's targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective in enabling them to succeed and thrive in school.

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

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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 and other leaders are effective in focusing improvement plans on appropriate priorities and they communicate them clearly, together with the school's ambitious targets, to staff. Subject leaders, mostly appointed over the past three years, are taking appropriate responsibility for improving standards and setting challenging targets in their areas. Leaders have successfully sharpened teachers' skills through training, for example in showing pupils how to link letters to the sounds they make, an important factor in raising standards in reading. Leaders are starting to share good practice and better use data to drive improvements but these plans have not been in place long enough to show clear success. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school. Its growing understanding of data means that it is beginning to challenging the school robustly over its effectiveness.

The school is committed to equal opportunities. For example, the improvement in girls' progress shows its policies are becoming effective. Safety and safeguarding are given a high priority. Child protection procedures fully meet current safeguarding requirements, and are robust and regularly updated. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with pupils in school are rigorous. Lessons on safety and safeguarding provide pupils with a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school is good at engaging parents' and carers' support for their children's learning at home. For example, it provides them with specific information about how they can help their children to prepare for the tests at the end of Year 6. The classes it arranged to show how parents and carers can help their children at home with mathematics, reading and writing were well attended. The school is a happy and harmonious community in which pupils integrate well. Its promotion of wider community cohesion is well developed. For example, it encourages and helps local people improve their qualifications through its strong links with the local college. Developing links with communities abroad extend further pupils' understanding of diversity and global issues.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school and their progress in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Most transfer to Year 1 with the knowledge, understanding and skills normally expected for their age. Children make good progress in their personal development. They are polite and well behaved. They are gaining good levels of independence, for example, through helping to clear up resources at the end of a lesson. Progress in writing is slower than in other areas of learning because not enough time is allocated to developing this skill. The progress of boys and girls is similar. Parents and carers are very pleased with the induction arrangements and the regular feedback they receive about their child’s progress and development.

The satisfactory teaching provides an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning both indoors and outside. Some learning observed was good. For example, in one lesson, a group working with an adult quickly improved their computer skills by using the mouse and software effectively to draw and colour a picture. However, children are not always stretched sufficiently by their work. This is because adults do not consistently use progress data effectively to plan challenging next steps for each child.

Leaders ensure that staff extend their skills through training, which helps to ensure that adults are well qualified in Early Years Foundation Stage teaching. Assessments are regular and accurate. Their use to identify where improvements to teaching and the curriculum are needed is improving.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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

A typical proportion of parents and carers returned a questionnaire. Their comments indicate that they believe their children are very safe, enjoy school and are well cared for. The inspection endorses these views. A few parents and carers thought that the school does not always deal with poor behaviour effectively. During the visit, inspectors found that behaviour was good in lessons and around the school, and pupils confirmed that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour were dealt with well. A very small number of parents wrote to say that they had concerns about the way bullying was dealt with. Inspectors investigated this worry and found that the school takes bullying very seriously and uses sound measures and policies to deal promptly with any rare incidences that occur. Pupils told inspectors that they have full confidence in the way that the school deals with such matters.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Woodlands Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 147 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 294 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	52	62	42	7	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	58	58	39	1	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	55	37	85	58	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	37	84	57	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	41	82	56	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	67	46	70	48	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	41	80	54	3	2	3	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)	53	36	84	57	5	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	37	86	59	4	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	33	74	50	18	12	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	31	78	53	12	8	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	55	37	77	52	8	5	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	72	49	65	44	6	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	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 are 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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Woodlands Community Primary School, Tamworth, B77 3JX

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when the inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and the opportunity to talk with some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I was pleased to hear about the recent success of your football team. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. Woodlands is a satisfactory school, which means it does some things well but could do some things even better. Here are some of the things we found out.

You told us that you enjoy school and feel very safe and secure. You try hard in lessons and your progress is getting better. Your behaviour is good. You are keen to take responsibility in school. You have good relationships with your teachers. The curriculum provides plenty of exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy. Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you. The headteacher and staff are working together to make the school improve.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning. They need to:

- improve your progress by making sure you work at a fast pace and that teachers always provide you with work that is not too hard or too easy
- for you older pupils, plan more lessons to improve your skills in solving mathematical problems and mental arithmetic and give you more opportunity in all lessons to write accurate sentences in longer pieces of work which are correctly punctuated, especially for the boys.
- make your progress better by helping teachers share their good teaching skills and to use your test results to see where your learning can be improved.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons, behaving well and attending regularly. We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin
Lead inspector

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