

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134236
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	395372
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Moss HMI

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	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Blount
Headteacher	J McEnaney
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Moss
Helen Gaunt
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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 24 lessons involving 17 teachers, whole-school sessions, including an assembly, other occasions on which pupils were learning, and made a series of shorter visits to several lessons. Meetings were held with members of staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors had conversations with various parents and carers on several occasions during the inspection. They also took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, scrutinised a sample of the pupils' work, and looked at a range of documentation, including plans, policies, records relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. They looked at 128 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others completed by the pupils and members of staff.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who speak English as an additional language are low. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus stage or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average, but, more generally, the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is twice the national average. A much higher proportion of pupils enters and leaves the school other than at the usual times of the year than is the case nationally and there are significant imbalances in the proportions of boys and girls within different year groups. The school did not meet the government floor standards in 2011, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Gold standard for the quality of its work in this area.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Woodlands Primary is a good school. It does many things well and has particularly strong relationships with parents and carers, such that they are able to have close involvement with their children’s education. As a result, parents and carers hold the school in justifiably high regard. The school is not outstanding yet because the quality of teaching, though good typically, has not been sufficient to secure better than good achievement by the pupils overall in the period since the previous inspection.
- The pupils achieve well. Often, they make better progress than might be expected from levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage that are typically substantially below those expected for their age. A drop in the performance of Year 6 pupils in 2011 has been reversed substantially in 2012. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are generally making good progress throughout the school although the pupils do not achieve as well in writing as in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching is good. The teachers’ high levels of personal motivation, enthusiasm and good subject knowledge are significant factors leading to good attitudes to learning among the pupils. However, the teaching does not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to extend and develop their skills for managing their learning themselves.
- The pupils behave well and demonstrated impeccable behaviour on occasions such as in whole-school assemblies.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have been very successful in developing a highly cohesive and strong staff team. They use well extensive data on the pupils’ achievement to manage the performance of the staff and to evaluate the work of the school. After an untypically poor set of results in national tests in 2011, the school acted swiftly and very effectively to identify the cause and rectify it. As a result of the actions taken, the school’s test results in 2012, in English and mathematics combined, improved by 23 percentage points, with very nearly three-quarters of the pupils reaching the nationally expected level and more than one third exceeding it.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - improving the quality of the pupils' writing, including by providing more opportunities to appreciate a wide variety of literary styles and to write creatively
 - increasing the opportunities for the pupils to develop, ask and work on their own questions and lines of enquiry in lessons
 - increasing the use of questioning by teachers to challenge, extend and deepen the pupils' thinking
 - ensuring that marking and other feedback to the pupils helps them always to understand clearly what they must do next to reach higher levels in their work and by providing opportunities for them to act on the guidance.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typically well below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress, so that by the time they enter Year 1, the proportion reaching the expected levels has increased substantially. The good progress continues and, since the previous inspection, the pupils' attainment has been broadly average overall by the end of Key Stage 2. There are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and those known to be eligible for free school meals make progress similar to their peers at the school.

The pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They enjoy learning, sustaining good levels of concentration and a good work rate in lessons. They work carefully and conscientiously and, routinely, try to produce their best. The pupils' ability to express themselves orally increases markedly as they progress through the school, supported by their increasingly secure self-confidence. They become increasingly keen to engage in conversation and to talk on a range of subjects with interest and curiosity. Parents and carers, who wrote to the inspectors, commented often on the progress made by their children, describing them, for example, as 'coming on in leaps and bounds'. One parent, whose child did not speak English on joining the school, described the child's progress as, 'nothing short of remarkable'.

The pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. Their attainment in reading was well below average by the end of Key Stage 1 in two of the years since the previous inspection and also for Year 6 pupils in 2011. Attainment in reading of Year 6 in 2012 has recovered strongly, such that, overall, it is broadly average. The pupils show a good level of interest in reading. Different levels of skill were evident when they read to inspectors, but the pupils become confident as readers, able to identify and blend the sounds made by letters and read unfamiliar words aloud successfully.

Quality of teaching

Generally, the lessons seen during the inspection proceeded briskly. A skilfully managed mixture of having the pupils work in different groups and on a variety of well-conceived

tasks, including using up-to-date information and communication technology (ICT), secured good progress by the pupils, throughout the school. Lesson plans are detailed and include approaches to providing activities that allow the teachers to assess how well the pupils are doing. The lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils' social and moral development. The pupils say that such teaching is typical and, overwhelmingly, their parents and carers also believe that the quality is good.

In lessons, the teachers show considerable alertness to the needs of individual pupils and find ways to include the full range in all aspects of a lesson. The teaching support staff are deployed well and support the progress of more-able pupils, as well as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Several parents and carers wrote comments to the inspectors praising the individual support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. One stated, for example, 'I feel that, although the school is full to capacity, I must make you aware that Woodlands Primary School is excellent for treating and meeting every individual child's needs and this is something they should be proud of.'

The marking of the pupils' work is undertaken diligently and is frequently of good quality. It does not always, however, indicate clearly what the pupils must do to raise the level of their work and that is the case similarly with other comments to them during lessons. Also, the pupils are not always given opportunities to follow up on the teachers' marking and comments, to correct errors or produce a higher standard of work. Often, the teachers used questions skilfully to increase the pupils' learning, but not always to challenge and deepen the pupils' thinking and understanding. Generally, the teaching focuses well on improving the pupils' reading, mathematical, and writing skills. There are not enough opportunities, however, for the pupils to experience the full range of types of creative writing and to develop their own skills accordingly. In addition, the inspectors observed few occasions on which the pupils were enabled to develop their own questions and pursue their own interests in relation to the learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a very friendly place. The pupils work and play together cooperatively and supportively. A well-managed process for promoting attendance and dealing with absence has resulted in improvements and attendance is now broadly average. The pupils feel very safe and are manifestly at ease with the staff and with each other, whatever an individual's background. From the earliest ages, the pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when using ICT. The pupils joining the school at unusual times within the year are helped to settle in quickly. Several described to inspectors how happy they are at Woodlands and how well they are getting on. Instances of racist behaviour are very rare and the pupils express little concern about bullying of any sort. The pupils respond usually instantly to the teachers' instructions and, predominantly, the teachers manage behaviour very effectively with subtle techniques, such as a look or a quiet word. There has been no permanent exclusion at the school for several years, but the number of short-term exclusions has risen in the period since the previous inspection to be above average. Along with their parents and carers, the pupils say, however, that any misbehaviour and examples of disruption to lessons are dealt with quickly and effectively.

The staff are good role models to the pupils. The pupils' confidence and self-esteem are enhanced significantly by the manner in which they are treated by the staff and the consistent use of the school's rewards system, to which the pupils respond well and which reinforces good behaviour effectively as a result. The pupils undertake and take very

seriously a variety of responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school on a daily basis, from acting as house captains, to supervising the use of the toilets, and helping to prepare resources for lessons and activities. They feel able to influence the school in meaningful ways; for example members of the school council described how their views about how to improve attainment led to changes in the teaching timetable. There are fewer opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility for managing and directing their own learning and, accordingly, to acquire and demonstrate the skills and attitudes for doing so.

Leadership and management

The senior leadership of the school is held in very high regard by the staff, the pupils, and parents and carers. The school as a whole, equally, enjoys a high level of confidence among the pupils and the community. The pattern of pupils' progress and attainment has varied in the period since the previous inspection. However, the school's systems and approaches to managing the performance of the staff and monitoring the quality of the school's work are thorough. Whole-school improvement plans are focused on relevant areas and the leaders and managers ensure that priorities, such as improving boys' literacy, are pursued vigorously. The governing body gathers evidence on the work of the school at first hand. There is a high level of commitment demonstrated throughout the staff, the product in part of a much-valued approach to professional development that has enabled the staff to achieve a good level of consistency in the quality of teaching. Leaders and managers evaluate the school's work accurately and the emphatic and successful response to the drop in the pupils' attainment in 2011 indicates the school's capacity for improvement.

The curriculum is designed carefully to meet the needs of the full range of pupils, based on principles concerned with promoting the pupils' academic, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Some particular changes to the curriculum, made in the interest of keeping it relevant to the pupils' needs, were a major factor leading to the drop in the pupils' attainment in 2011. As a result, the changes have been reversed. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, in which a high proportion of the pupils take part and which add significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of school and increase their levels of confidence and maturity.

The school prides itself on being very inclusive and in providing a place for any child. The staff have created a harmonious school community, in which pupils from all backgrounds show regard for and treat each other with respect. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet the current requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Doncaster, DN6 7RG

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. The inspectors spoke with you, looked at your work, read the results of questionnaires filled in by you, the staff, and your parents and carers, and spoke with some of your teachers. Here is a brief summary of the main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

- The school provides you with a good education.
- You make better progress than might be expected given your starting points when you start at the school; that includes those of you who find learning more difficult.
- Your attendance has improved and is now broadly average.
- Your behaviour is good. The inspectors found you to be very friendly, polite, and courteous. You are very happy at school. You get on together very well, which makes the school a very pleasant place to be.
- You enjoy learning and work hard in lessons. The quality of the teaching is good, but I do not think enough of it gives you a chance to be in control of what you do, or challenges you to improve your spoken answers in lessons.

Accordingly, I have asked the staff and the governing body to make sure that more lessons include the good features I have just described. I would also like them to make sure that you get more chances to learn about creative ways of writing and to write creatively. Finally, I would like the teachers to make sure always that they help you to know how to improve your work and to give you chances to do so.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

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