

Woodhouse Middle School

Woodhouse Lane, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7DR

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, standards in English and mathematics have risen and are now above the national average.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good quality support.
- Teaching is good and, at times, outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They offer good quality feedback, particularly in English, so that pupils know how well they are doing and the next steps they need to take.
- Teachers set ambitious targets for each of their pupils. The pupils themselves are keen to meet and exceed their targets.
- Pupils enjoy learning and behave well, both in lessons and when moving around the school. They show respect to each other and to the adults who work with them.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked successfully to develop many aspects of the school's work since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and as a result the rate of pupils' progress has increased.
- The governing body provides excellent support to school leaders. Governors are very knowledgeable and all are fully committed to making sure that the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress. At times, the work set for pupils is too easy or too difficult and the pace of learning is too slow.
- Occasionally, pupils are not given enough guidance, at the start of an activity, to steer their learning. As a result, their progress slows.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 21 lessons taught by 19 teachers. They also carried out a number of shorter visits to lessons across the school.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and five members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Responses to questionnaires completed by 31 staff were also analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including national published assessment information and the school's own records, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding records and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

Julie Price Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Taylor	Additional Inspector
Gerald Griffin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional support for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services) is below average.
- The school works in partnership with five other local schools within the Biddulph Schools Partnership Trust.
- Pupils from the school do not attend any alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for the end of Year 6, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - the work set is always at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils
 - pupils are given clear and precise guidance at the start of an activity to help steer their learning
 - learning moves at a brisk pace in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils join the school in Year 5 their attainment is generally above that normally expected. They make good progress, so that attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 is above average. Attainment by the end of Year 8 is above expectations for this age group.
- Achievement has been on an improving trend since the last inspection. Attainment in reading is particularly good, being well above average in Year 6. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of books and those who struggle with reading are given good support to help them improve quickly.
- Attainment in writing and mathematics has not been as high as that in reading but is now improving. There are opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and literacy skills across a range of subjects and this is helping to raise standards further.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they are given high quality tailored support. Skilled staff work closely with pupils, either individually or in small groups, to support their good progress.
- Pupils eligible for additional support through the pupil premium achieve well. Over recent years, the attainment of those eligible for free school meals has risen and in 2012 they attained the same standards in English as their peers. In mathematics, information on achievement shows that they were approximately one term behind those pupils not eligible for free school meals, but the school has worked well to narrow this gap. By the end of Year 8, the school's own information on attainment shows that there is little difference between the standards attained by those eligible for free school meals and other pupils.
- The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and this helps staff to make sure that those at risk of falling behind are quickly given support.
- Staff set ambitious targets set for individual pupils. Pupils know their targets and are strongly encouraged to work towards them. They respond well and many meet their targets before the end of the year. Higher targets are then set for them and their progress towards these is closely checked.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers are keen for their pupils to achieve well. They expect pupils to work hard and behave well during lessons so that progress is at least good. Pupils are aware of teachers' high expectations and are happy to tackle the challenging work that is often set for them.
- There is a good climate for learning in almost all classrooms. Teachers frequently use questioning to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. There are usually plenty of opportunities for pupils to work with each other and find out things for themselves, guided by staff.
- Learning typically moves at a brisk pace. When pupils complete a task or activity they are usually encouraged to move swiftly on to the next stage. Occasionally they are given too long to complete a piece of work or they are not moved on to the next task soon enough, and as a result, progress slows.

- Where teaching is best, lessons inspire and motivate pupils. For example, in a history lesson observed during the inspection, pupils worked exceptionally well together using a variety of resources to make their own decisions about who was to blame for the sinking of the Titanic. Pupils made excellent progress, not just in extending their knowledge of the event, but also in developing their thinking and reasoning skills.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often give detailed and helpful feedback. Consequently, pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to move to the next level. Marking is particularly strong in English, but good and improving in other subject areas, including mathematics. A few pupils do not take enough care in the presentation of their work and teachers do not always encourage them to take more pride in their work.
- Pupils are given time at the start of lessons to read teachers' feedback and respond to their comments. This helps pupils to make sure that mistakes are corrected and the quality of their work improves as a result.
- Teachers create many opportunities for pupils to reflect on the quality of their own work and that of their classmates. Pupils often make helpful notes on each other's work and teachers sometimes write their own comments on these, which adds to the quality of the feedback.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not give enough thought to planning activities that are at the right level of difficulty for the pupils in their class. At times, tasks are too easy or too difficult, and pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- At times, teachers do not give clear and precise guidance when explaining an activity to pupils and the advice given during the lesson does not steer the learning. When guidance is too vague, pupils do not always understand exactly what is expected of them and the work they produce is sometimes not linked to the intended learning. As a result, time is wasted and progress slows.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is calm and friendly environment where pupils feel safe. Pupils are respectful towards each other and are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have good attitudes to learning and apply themselves well in lessons. They particularly enjoy working in groups and have good social skills, cooperating well and showing that they value each other's contributions. Occasionally, however, when activities do not interest them, a few pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and they are confident that the school does not tolerate any sort of unkind behaviour. They have a very good understanding of the potential dangers of internet use. Visitors, including the police and the fire service, help to develop pupils' wider awareness of how to stay safe. All parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agreed that the school looked after their children well.
- Behaviour is consistently well managed by staff across the school. There is a well-established system of rewards which motivates pupils, particular the younger ones. Pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities and this helps to prepare them well for their transition to high school.
- Attendance is above average. Over the last year, the school has worked to improve the attendance of a few small groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals. This

work has been successful and absence rates for these pupils have fallen. All groups of pupils now attend school regularly and are punctual.

The leadership and management are good

- Over the last eighteen months the headteacher has led a sustained drive for improvement which has resulted in raised standards and better quality teaching. He is supported well by other members of the senior leadership team.
- All staff share the senior leaders' vision for the school's future and many say that they are proud to be part of the school community. Teachers recognise that many aspects of the school's work have improved since the last inspection and are determined that this should continue.
- Teaching is well managed. Teachers have precise and personalised targets to help them improve the quality of their work. These targets have a strong focus on pupils' progress and teachers understand their role in making sure that each pupil achieves as well as possible.
- Senior leaders use a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning. As well as observing lessons, they look closely at information on pupils' achievement and meet with pupils regularly to discuss their learning. This helps the leadership team to maintain an accurate and detailed view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The school's work as part of the Biddulph Schools Partnership Trust is now beginning to develop as the Trust becomes more established. The schools work together to provide joint training for staff and governors. Woodhouse School works alongside the other middle school in the Trust to look closely at the quality of pupils' work and to make sure that all staff agree on the levels awarded to individual pupils. This helps to confirm the accuracy of the school's information on pupils' achievement, particularly those in Year 8.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. No pupil is prevented from accessing the full range of activities on offer. Pupil premium funding has been used to provide additional adult support and a range of resources, including refurbished rooms for tailored support sessions and information and communication technology resources.
- The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy the range of activities offered by the school and talk with enthusiasm about their favourites. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, not just through the subjects that pupils study but also through events such as the recent 'diversity day'. This involved a range of activities, including visits to Sikh and Hindu places of worship as well as to various places in Chinatown.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. All staff are subject to the necessary checks.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has made a strong contribution to the school's improvement since the last inspection and continues to provide high quality support. Governors have a very thorough awareness of information on pupils' achievement and are confident in discussing detailed aspects of this information with senior leaders. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are also fully aware of the typical features of teaching across the school. This helps them to contribute to discussions on the performance

management of teachers and to support decisions on salary progression. Members of the governing body have knowledge and expertise in different areas, for example literacy or special educational needs, and this means that they are well equipped to offer advice and support to the school as well as challenge. They manage the budget well and keep a close check on how the school's use of the pupil premium funding is helping to improve the achievement of eligible pupils. Governors recognise the importance of keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in education. They take responsibility for making sure that they are suitably trained and have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their roles.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124432
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402256

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Hamnett
Headteacher	Michael Hall
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2010
Telephone number	01782 297875
Fax number	01782 297875
Email address	headteacher@woodhouse-middle.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

