

Woodcocks' Well CofE (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Church Street, Mow Cop, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST7 3NQ

Inspection dates 18–19 June 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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.

- This is a caring and happy school where everyone is well supported and warmly valued as an individual.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good and they have positive attitudes to their work. They particularly enjoy playing outside in the attractive and stimulating school grounds.
- The staff work well together as a team to improve what is provided for everyone.
- Pupils of a wide range of abilities and from all backgrounds achieve well from their different starting points.
- Pupils read well with many, including some of the youngest, reading confidently.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Staff have strong working relationships with pupils and praise their efforts well.
- The leadership of the school provides a good steer to improving the facilities and a clear focus on teaching and learning.
- Governance is good. Governors understand data on pupil performance and are well informed about different aspects of school life.
- Parents and carers speak with great pleasure about how the staff recognise their children as individuals and look after them so well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress pupils make in writing is not as strong as in other subjects.
- The work that pupils do is sometimes very similar for all abilities and does not always provide the best level of challenge for all.
- Checks of the work of the school are not as rigorous or searching as they could be in identifying specific areas for improvement.
- School improvement planning is extensive but lacks clarity and precision in identifying the key targets for improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in parts of eight lessons and other activities. Some of these were joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, the Key Stage 1 leader and the special educational needs coordinator. Discussions took place with groups of pupils, governors and an educational consultant working as the school improvement partner.
- The inspector took account of the views of 18 parents and carers to the online questionnaire (Parent View). She also considered the views expressed by several parents and carers at the start of both inspection days and reviewed the eight responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including data on pupils' progress, and planning and monitoring information. She also listened to some pupils reading and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspector considered records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Around 16% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is below the national average. This provides additional funding for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is double the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.
- While mobility in and out of the school is around the national average, it is much higher in some year groups than others.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - checking that pupils make good progress in their writing by developing a range of skills to produce work of consistently high quality
 - ensuring that activities contain a good level of challenge for those of different abilities so that all pupils make equally good progress.
- Improve the monitoring of the work of the school by:
 - making sure that checks of all aspects of school life and the pupils' work are rigorous and evaluative in identifying areas for further improvement
 - ensuring that school improvement planning is concise and securely based on current data about the progress made by groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- With very small numbers of children in each year group, their skills and experiences on entry are very varied. The current Reception group have skills that are at least typical for their age and several entered with a good level of early development.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress as they move through the school and they achieve well. Last year, pupils generally did better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. This is in part because some pupils joined the school at different times having experienced difficulties in their early lives and education. The school is very successful at integrating these pupils and records show that many of them make considerable progress from their different starting points.
- Last year's data indicated some differences in the achievement of boys and girls, with girls doing well in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2. Pupils' books show this is related to particular groups of pupils and is not a consistent picture across the school.
- Progress in phonics (the sounds letters make) has accelerated this year due to the strong focus by staff on improving pupil's skills. Recent assessments indicate that the pupils in Year 1 are set to do considerably better than last year in end of year checks.
- Pupils across the school read well. Standards in reading have often been better than those in other areas. Some of the most-able younger pupils have very good reading skills and read fluently and accurately. Some are able to read complex letters from an imaginary pirate with high levels of confidence. Pupils read regularly in school and are often well supported in reading at home.
- Pupils generally make good progress in mathematics and have a secure understanding of numbers. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 collected information about their favourite sports into a tally chart and used this information to construct their own bar graphs. The most able pupils were then able to label the axes and compare the data for different groups quite confidently.
- Pupils who find learning more difficult, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the small number of pupils who are looked after make good overall progress because they are well supported in their personal development. This leads to them increasing their confidence and makes a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. Parents and carers speak with warmth about how well the school has supported their children and the impact on their development.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium varies widely from year-to-year and is generally good overall. For example, these pupils outperformed their classmates in Key Stage 1 tests last year in reading and mathematics. However, a similar group of pupils did not do well in Key Stage 2, being around two years behind others in mathematics, writing and reading. Careful scrutiny of current work and assessment data shows this is improving slightly.
- Additional funding for primary school sport is making a positive impact on standards, with staff increasing their skills and confidence in teaching games and gymnastics.
- Pupils' writing skills have been below those in other areas for some time. The school has been involved in various initiatives to improve writing but has not been entirely successful in driving through consistent improvement. While some groups spell and write accurately and neatly, others do not. In some classes pupils write imaginatively, at length and in depth, but others do not.
- Older pupils' work in their 'beautiful books' is of high quality. This includes drafting and then producing work in a range of imaginative styles, for example about the Second World War. The editing of such work ensures that this is of high quality. Work in other books across the school does not, however, show many extended pieces of writing that are technically accurate. This does not enable all pupils to reach the higher levels in their writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Observations of teaching, assessments of pupils' progress and samples of work indicate that teaching and learning are typically good.
- Children in the Reception group and in Year 1 enjoy their learning because there are good links between subjects to give a purpose for learning. For example, pupils enjoyed reading a letter from Captain Blackbeard and then writing back to him. They also liked making a simple bar graph to show the different types of things they find in the sea. Some of the most-able pupils were then challenged well to decide how to sort and record this information.
- Across the school, staff have strong working relationships with pupils that build their confidence and motivates them to try hard. This was seen well in Years 5 and 6 when working in groups discussing the changes in land use for a planned development of a hotel on an unspoilt beach. Because the pupils knew their ideas were valued they were often keen to share their views, including some who were less confident in expressing themselves.
- There are strong links between subjects through imaginative themes and topics. Such a creative approach captures the pupils' interest and they enjoy role-play and working in groups.
- The school has extended its support for pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those entitled to pupil premium funding and those who are looked after. This includes times when teachers work specifically with those who have additional needs while support staff work with the most-able pupils. Other activities supporting different groups of pupils, including the headteacher's work with specific groups, is helping pupils reach their potential.
- The school has improved the marking of pupils work during the year. Pupils know that 'pink is to think' and 'blue is brilliant' and recognise what they have to do to improve their work. However, some pupils' work is not dated or titled which limits its use in assessing their progress over time.
- The work of teaching assistants is generally good. They work with identified groups of pupils and usually provide the right amount of support and not too much or too little guidance.
- The planning of lessons is generally effective and usually provides an 'open ended' task for them to complete at different levels. However, the work in pupils' books indicates that often this is the same or very similar for all abilities and tasks do not provide some with an appropriate level of challenge particularly in their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Observations and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils typically behave well in a range of activities. Pupils say they like coming to school and making lots of friends. They particularly enjoy active playtimes on the steeply banked and very beautiful play areas which lend themselves well to imaginative and cooperative play.
- Parents and carers note with pleasure how welcoming and warm pupils and staff are to those who are new to the school. They note how this has helped some with a range of difficult early experiences settle well and grow in self-confidence.
- Pupils are polite to each other and the adults around them. They work well with a partner and in small groups. Pupils are generally enthusiastic and eager to learn as seen in the pre-planned 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' where pupils in Years 2 and 3 very much enjoyed dressing up for the day and taking part in related activities.
- Most pupils try hard with their work, although sometimes this is untidily presented in their books. Across the school, many are keen to take part in discussions and share their ideas. However, a few pupils and particularly some older ones wait for others to contribute their ideas. Very occasionally, in class and group activities a few sit quietly and offer little. This does not help them develop their vocabulary or boost their writing skills.
- Attendance is above the national average. Some pupils arrive a little late for school but staff monitor this carefully.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are able to explain that bullying is a repeated action and understand the types of bullying that children of their age might encounter, including cyber bullying. Pupils identify that visitors to school help them understand how to keep safe in a range of situations.
- All of the parents spoken to during the inspection, and the very large majority who responded to the inspection questionnaire, believe that pupils are happy and safe in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governors have maintained many of the long-standing pastoral strengths of the school coupled with a determination to continually improve teaching and learning.
- Staff work well together as a united team to ensure the school continues to move forwards. The school has made improvements to provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This includes the recent opening of purpose-built accommodation for children in the Reception class and younger children in the adjoining pre-school.
- The school is improving its use of data through the ways in which it checks and tracks pupil progress. There are regular staff discussions about the achievement of individuals, groups and cohorts. These discussions are well linked to professional development opportunities for all staff, including work with other schools. Leaders are now keen to ensure that recent assessments of children's skills and experiences on entry to the school accurately reflect their skills and are not too cautious.
- There is a clear focus on continuing to improve teaching and learning. Monitoring activities, such as checks on the quality of teaching and learning and the work in pupils' books, are carried out. The checks made sometimes lack evaluative rigour and do not always drill down into exactly what needs to be improved.
- School self-evaluation summaries and improvement planning are extensive and descriptive documents. While identifying areas for improvement these are often obscured under additional and historic information. This does not give a clear focus for new staff or the governing body to what the main priorities are and obscures the drive to raise achievement.
- All of the parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the quality of care and education provided for their families. They are very confident that their children are happy, well-known to the staff and are safe and well-cared for.
- The school provides a good range of activities to promote learning in all subjects. Sometimes activities are very imaginative and well linked to themes and topics that interest the pupils. This was well illustrated in Years 2 and 3 where the focus on the life and work of authors such as Lewis Carroll led to imaginative activities including making an electrical circuit to illuminate the 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party'.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well considered. The personal development of pupils is a high priority for school leaders, as demonstrated in the warmth shown to pupils by the headteacher in school celebration assemblies.
- The school ensures that additional funding, such as the primary school sport funding, is used appropriately. For example, a teacher from a local secondary school is working in a coaching role with staff and pupils as seen in a Year 5 and 6 rounders lesson. However, the school is at an early stage of monitoring the effectiveness of such activities, particularly the impact on pupils with limited skills or interest in sports.
- The school also ensures funding to support pupils entitled to the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is used effectively. This includes the use of additional teaching and support staff and the headteacher.
- The school works well with an external consultant as the school improvement partner. This ensures an increasing focus on what the data tell everyone about the progress individuals and groups of pupils are making. The local authority provides very light touch support for a school that it perceives to be successful.

- Procedures to safeguard the pupils meet current requirements. Staff are very responsive to concerns and quickly address issues. However, the checks made of the school site are not as regular and rigorous as they could be.
- This is a warm and supportive school where the staff make a good job of supporting all pupils, including those who might be vulnerable to their circumstances. Staff make sure pupils have equal access to activities by providing them with additional support enabling them to take part in a range of activities. The school is successful in fostering positive relationships and tackling discrimination.
- Staff performance is managed well and appropriately linked to pay awards. With the clear and shared determination to continue to move forwards, the school demonstrates it has the capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good and governors are well informed of the quality of provision in the school. Much of the work of the governing body is done through committee meetings where there is a good focus on the curriculum and progress. Some governors have a strong grasp of what the data tell them about achievement. Some visit the school regularly to make sure the school is meeting the requirements placed upon it, for example in terms of supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This helps ensure that funds are spent appropriately. Governors are informed about the quality of teaching and learning and support the headteacher in managing teachers' performance and pay-related issues.
 - Governors also check that funding for the pupil premium and primary school sport funding is spent appropriately. Governors are successful in acting as a critical friend of the school, realising that with a small staff they have to stand back from day-to-day activities and continually challenge leaders and question what they do.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111255 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 443902 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 96 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ian Doughty |
| Headteacher | Julie Massen |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 November 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01782 512323 |
| Fax number | 01782 513099 |
| Email address | head@woodcockswell.cheshire.sch.uk |

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