

Woodlands Primary School

Eddisbury Road, Whitby, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 2JT

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school is good and rapidly improving as a result of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher who is passionate about the pupils at Woodlands reaching their full potential.
- Leaders at all levels are relentless in checking teaching and learning. This is now beginning to have a significant impact on standards across the school.
- Pupils enjoy the many creative opportunities they have to develop their skills across the curriculum.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- The school's work with parents is outstanding; in particular it provides many opportunities for parents to take part in their child's learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning when working on their own, with a partner or in small groups.
- Pupils trust the adults in school. They say these adults treat them fairly and, as a result, pupils feel very safe.
- There are well planned opportunities within the curriculum to ensure pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school. Work is marked effectively. Pupils are given clear direction on how work can be improved.
- Teachers have skilfully created an environment which supports pupils in their learning and helps them to work well on their own.
- Displays around school are vibrant and reflect the many exciting activities in which the school is involved.
- The achievement of current learners in Key Stage 2 is good. Many pupils are now making rapid progress.
- Attainment is improving year on year by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils in this key stage are now making rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make strong progress and their provision is very well managed by the deputy headteacher.
- The early years is outstanding. The youngest children make rapid progress and get off to a flying start because of excellent teaching and leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In mathematics, work is occasionally not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and there are times when they spend too long on an activity before being given more difficult work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 22 teachers.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, middle leaders, other staff and pupils.
- The inspectors looked at the school's documentation including: safeguarding policies; the school development plan; records used by the school to measure how well it is doing; minutes of governing body meetings; records of behaviour; and also displays in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- The inspectors took into account the 92 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and letters of support sent in by parents.
- The inspectors also analysed the 48 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector
Dave Blackburne	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the Nursery are in part-time and the Reception class is full-time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has recently been awarded the Artsmark Gold, Investors in People Gold Award and the Primary Science Quality Mark Gold Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and raise standards further by:
 - providing the most able pupils with work that is always challenging so that they reach their full potential
 - ensuring that the most able pupils do not spend too long on activities which they already understand before being moved on to more difficult work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led by an inspirational headteacher and she is very ably assisted by her deputy and middle leaders. Much of their work is outstanding but the impact is only now being seen following a period of instability in staffing.
- Senior and middle leaders are relentless in their checking of teaching and learning. Every week an aspect of school life is scrutinised to ensure that teaching is continually improving and that pupils are making rapid progress. The reports of these activities show teachers very clearly how their teaching can improve and which pupils can do better.
- The school has highly effective systems for managing the performance of teachers. Teachers are challenged to meet highly aspirational targets and they are provided with the appropriate training and support to achieve these. Teachers talk very positively about the opportunities they have to improve their teaching and how they are being prepared to take on more senior roles.
- The achievement of each individual pupil is meticulously checked. All leaders have a wealth of information on how well each child is performing. As a result of this rigour, equality of opportunity is well promoted. All staff go out of their way to ensure that no pupil misses out on the many extra enrichment activities the school provides.
- Adults plan the curriculum carefully to ensure that the fundamental British values are well understood. The school has a 'value of the month' which the whole school community understands. This is very effective and does much to tackle discrimination and foster good relations.
- Curriculum leaders have highly effective systems in place to make sure that pupils enjoy a strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Corridors are rich with vibrant displays following the whole-school topic on the book *'The Hunter'*. Pupils have used the story to study different aspects of African culture in a highly creative and exciting manner. This is one of the many ways which ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is outstanding. These pupils enjoy many high-quality opportunities, such as working with the Manchester Camerata over four days writing a musical or working with specialists in mathematics, science, drama, computing and sport. These form part of the school's 'Challenge Saturday Initiative'. The work is very well led and supported by all subject leaders.
- Additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The proportions of these pupils who reached the higher level at the end of Year 6 are above the national average in all subjects.
- The primary school sport and physical education funding has been used very effectively. A physical education teacher has been employed to teach high-quality lessons to all pupils and also to provide additional instruction for the most talented pupils in sport. The school has their own inter-house sporting competitions as well as competing against other schools in a wide range of sports.
- Communication and relationships with parents are outstanding. The school website is highly informative. It explains to parents what learning their children are undertaking as well as keeping them informed with all the necessary information and school policies. Parents can also attend workshops to understand how they can support their child's learning. The school listens to parents' views at meetings and improvements are being made as a result of these suggestions. A small number of parents believe that the manner in which concerns are dealt with could be better.
- School leaders are rigorous in following up when pupils are absent and, as a result, attendance is above the national average. Pupils are punctual.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements. Staff are very well trained.
- The local authority monitors the achievement of pupils and provides support appropriate to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors clearly feel passionate about their school and are determined to provide the best opportunities for the pupils of Woodlands. They have a detailed understanding of how well the school is doing and what can be done further to improve. They have undertaken visits with senior leaders and consultants including a review of mathematics teaching and they have observed other lessons. Leaders at all levels present information to the governing body and, as a result, governors are very well informed.
 - Governors understand the extensive work being done to manage the performance of teachers and that teachers' progression up the pay scale is not automatic.
 - The governors have received appropriate training so they can better understand the achievement of

pupils. They explained how they look at the performance data in great depth so that they can challenge and assist the school in improving.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In class, behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary. Pupils did, however, say that a small number of pupils could behave better, and in a few lessons pupils became restless when they were not kept fully challenged.
- On the playground, pupils behave well and are very well supervised. Pupils enjoy playing on the extensive grounds and equipment. The school is free of litter and very well maintained. Pupils are encouraged to move around school in a calm and orderly manner.
- Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their learning whether working on their own or with a partner or in a small group. They show a genuine interest for their work and most exercise books show that pupils take a real pride in how they present their work. There are, however, a small number of younger pupils who do not take enough care with their handwriting.
- Behaviour logs show that any incidents are followed up thoroughly and this was confirmed by pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. It is outstanding as result of a highly effective and well-planned curriculum. Pupils understand how to look after themselves and how to stay safe in a wide range of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils have a secure understanding of the different types of bullying and homophobic language.
- Pupils told the inspectors how safe they feel. One pupil explained, 'We trust each other and our staff.' Another talked about how 'we care for each other'. A high proportion of parents strongly agree that their children are kept safe by the school.
- The school's actions to care for the more vulnerable pupils are highly effective.
- Pupils are confident that all visitors to the school are properly checked and do not pose any threat to them. Risk assessments are carried out meticulously.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school with elements of outstanding practice, and parents agree that their children are well taught.
- The classroom environment uses many different ways to support pupils with their learning, for example, a mathematics 'wall' has calculation methods for pupils to see and this helps them to work on their own without needing the support of the teacher.
- Additional support is provided around the class to improve writing and spelling and this is having a significant impact on the progress pupils are making. In writing lessons, pupils use the support well. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were provided with prompts so they could check that their writing included all the necessary features. This practice throughout school has led to strong achievement in writing.
- The school is doing much to promote a love of reading. There are many areas around school where children can read and some can be found in unlikely places, such as the 'book nook'. This goes alongside well-organised reading lessons, where teachers ask good questions to extend learning. Achievement in reading is beginning to improve rapidly and now the proportion of pupils in Year 6 working at higher levels is above the national average.
- Teachers use effective strategies to encourage all pupils in class to think about the questions they are asked. They allow time for pupils to share ideas with a partner and this leads to all pupils being in a better position to respond and a pupil can always 'phone a friend' if they are still unsure!
- Teaching assistants provide strong support. In a Year 1 class adults skilfully moved between groups supporting learning and ensuring pupils of all abilities made rapid progress.
- Pupils are set regular homework to practise their basic skills as well as more extended tasks which support learning across the curriculum. This work is completed in the pupils' Learning Logs; much of this is high-quality work, as was seen in their research linked to a topic on New York.

- English and mathematics books are very well marked. Staff use different coloured pens to highlight work which is good and where work can improve. Comments made by teachers also make it clear how pupils can improve their work and pupils respond to the feedback using a purple pen, especially for this activity.
- Teachers carefully plan activities that are mostly well matched to the different needs of pupils. This was particularly evident for the less able pupils, the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. All these groups make good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. The most able pupils however are capable of even greater challenges. There are also times when they spend too long on an activity before being moved onto more difficult work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of current pupils is good in all subjects and many are now making rapid progress as a result of the consistently good teaching and the rigour with which pupils' performance is checked.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 national screening check to assess the understanding and use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is improving and is now close to the national average.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are rising. Pupils make good progress in all subjects. Attainment in 2014 was above the national average in all subjects.
- Standards have risen considerably since the 2014 tests when, at Key Stage 2, attainment was close to the national average in reading, above the national average in writing and below in mathematics. Pupils are also progressing better than they have previously.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. The deputy headteacher carefully checks the progress of these pupils and oversees the types of activities provided for them in class. This exemplary practice has been instrumental in bringing about rapid progress.
- In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium was a term behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics. The proportions of these pupils making the progress expected of them was similar to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, well above in writing but below in mathematics.
- In July 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school was similar in all subjects. Throughout school, these pupils make good progress, which is very similar to that of their peers. The gaps in achievement are closing in English but not as quickly in mathematics.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is improving and they are now making good progress. They are not, however, always set work that is challenging enough. The most able pupils explained to the inspectors that there are times in mathematics lessons when they could achieve more.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Generally, children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below those that are typical for their age especially in their language and number skills and their understanding of the world.
- Children make outstanding progress and the proportion of children reaching their expected level at the end of the Reception class is above the national average. Evidence provided by the school shows that the majority of children are reaching targets that mean they will be ready for Year 1.
- Teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding. All adults are very well deployed. They provide highly effective support, ask good questions, work well as a team and are clearly well prepared to ensure all children achieve well. They have created an extremely attractive and stimulating environment.
- Children are happy, safe, settled and well cared for. They display excellent attitudes, behaviour and an enjoyment in their learning. Activities are very well organised with a good range of quality resources that stimulate their curiosity and provide good opportunities for them to investigate, both on their own and with their friends.
- Good improvements have been made to the outdoor area since the previous inspection and this now contributes very well to the children's creative and physical development.
- Transition arrangements are strong and good relationships are established with parents through high-quality workshops when parents can come in and learn how to help their child with different areas of the curriculum. They contribute to their children's learning journals and news books, which children enjoy and learn from.
- The early years leader has a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years.

She is highly rigorous in her evaluation of the development of children and in particular the progress children are making and she has a clear vision for the department's further development. Leadership and staff in this stage have been stable for some time so that improvements have continually resulted in high-quality provision.

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	135136
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	456185

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	610
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Wainwright
Headteacher	Anne Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2011
Telephone number	0151 338 2260
Fax number	0151 355 1975
Email address	admin@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk

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