

Woodhouses Voluntary Primary School

Ashton Road, Failsworth, Manchester M35 9WL

Inspection dates

21–22 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved because leaders, and especially the headteacher, have stabilised staffing and set high expectations for staff and pupils.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This means pupils, from the least able to the most able, are making good progress.
- The curriculum is planned well. It contains many exciting learning opportunities for the pupils, which they thoroughly enjoy.
- Teachers are using the new assessment systems effectively to identify and close gaps in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Reception Year make good progress because staff know them well and plan learning that takes account of each child's needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their excellent attitudes contribute greatly to their good progress.
- Pupils feel secure and know how to keep themselves safe. Leaders give high priority to pupils' welfare, safety and well-being.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The teaching of British values is an integral part of everything the school does.
- Pupils show high levels of care, trust and respect for each other, adults and the environment. They are very proud of their school.
- Staff morale is high and the vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not pay enough attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation when they mark their own or each other's work.
- Teachers do not check pupils' progress often enough in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- The school improvement plan lacks measureable milestones related to pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils make faster progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - assess how well pupils are acquiring knowledge and skills in different subjects to enable teachers to close gaps in pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils can achieve as much as they should for their age
 - encourage pupils to pay good attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation when they make written corrections on other pupils' work.
- Include measureable milestones for pupils' attainment and progress in the school's improvement plan, against which governors and leaders can judge more precisely how well their actions are bringing about improvement in the school's main priority areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has transmitted to all staff her clear determination that all pupils will make the best possible progress, personally and academically. Staff work well together to meet the high expectations that senior leaders and the governing body have of them and of the pupils. Consequently, pupils are now making good progress and standards are rising.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly and leave staff with well-considered development points. These points form the basis of subsequent monitoring to ensure that staff heed them. Senior leaders also make good use of meetings about pupils' progress to hold staff to account for how well their pupils are doing.
- Staff responsible for leading English, mathematics and the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability do a good job. They check teaching and learning and provide good levels of support for their colleagues, particularly in implementing the new assessment systems.
- Leaders of other subjects work together in teams on different subjects in turn. They ensure that the requirements of the new curriculum are met and have set up systems for assessing pupils' progress, but only at the end of the year. This means that teachers do not pick up gaps in learning and close them as quickly as they might to ensure pupils have the best possible chance of reaching the expectations for their age.
- The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes, as well as taking account of pupils' backgrounds and different levels of ability. Staff place strong emphasis on developing English and mathematical skills in different subjects. They pay due attention to teaching science and a modern foreign language.
- Within the curriculum, there are many exciting, highly motivating activities that help pupils to enjoy learning and make good progress. Good provision is made for the most able pupils, with work that deepens their understanding or takes their learning further.
- A large number of visits, visitors and well-attended extra-curricular activities, including in sports and the arts, add to what pupils learn in lessons. These activities often provide pupils with additional personal and academic skills that they can carry with them into adult life, such as the ability to stick at what they are doing to achieve success.
- Primary school sport funding is used effectively to extend the range of activities available to pupils as well as to improve the staff's ability to teach physical education, and to encourage pupils to take part in games and physical activities at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the curriculum, as does teaching pupils about British values. Pupils readily describe these values in detail, explaining how they are incorporated into the school's own values.
- Staff and pupils work together to avoid discrimination of any sort. Effective systems are in place to teach pupils about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, and how to avoid them. At the heart of everything the school does are opportunities for pupils to reflect, respect themselves and others, show compassion and tolerance, and learn how to be safe.
- The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. The outcomes are used to set the priorities in the school's improvement plan and subsequently the targets set for staff and pupils. The improvement plan lacks measureable milestones related to pupils' attainment and progress. This means that it is more difficult for senior leaders and the governing body to evaluate precisely the impact of their decisions on improving standards at the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have made good use of the external review requested at the previous inspection to sharpen their understanding of how to support senior leaders and challenge them to do even better. They have attended a wide range of relevant training, which they have used well to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities better.
 - The governing body has a good understanding of information about pupils' progress. Governors can pinpoint the progress of different groups of pupils accurately. They make sure that leaders spend the small amount of pupil premium funding the school receives wisely.
 - Using their extensive range of expertise, governors cross-check the comprehensive information they receive from the headteacher. They compare it with what they see when they visit the school and examine the work in pupils' books, and they question senior leaders about it.
 - Systems to manage the performance of staff, including the headteacher, are rigorous. The governing body checks that the targets set are closely aligned to the priorities in the school improvement plan and that it supports the staff in their own development. Governors are now fully involved in making decisions about pay increases.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All training, including that for child protection, is up to date, as are all safety arrangements. Thorough risk assessments ensure pupils are safe when out on visits and when visitors come to the school. The school is vigilant in checking the suitability of any adult who is likely to work with the pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well in questioning that deepens pupils' understanding and encourages them to think for themselves. They organise and manage the classroom environment well so that pupils can find relevant information to help their own learning when working individually. Pupils also speak very positively about how they ask a partner, or the pupils at their table, or use the 'working walls' to help them.
- Teachers capture pupils' interest quickly in lessons, manage their behaviour exceedingly well and ensure that time is used effectively. They regularly set the tone for purposeful and productive learning.
- Pupils of all abilities say that teachers encourage them 'to do stuff that is challenging' and 'never to give up'. They also say that teachers make sure they can reach their goals by caring for them and helping them to do so. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent.
- Staff identify the most able pupils in each year group, including those with higher learning potential in English and mathematics. They then prepare work that broadens or deepens the pupils' learning. For example, they allow pupils to work alongside pupils in an older age group, or set up problem-solving days such as the recent one that focused on gaining mastery in mathematics, to stretch their thinking further.
- Well-briefed teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. They break the pupils' learning into smaller steps, related to their individual needs, to enable them, too, to make good progress.
- In mathematics, teachers are making increasingly effective use of apparatus, equipment and visual imagery to help pupils grasp important concepts. They push pupils to explain their answers, often posing problems that require pupils to think deeply, reason why their calculations worked or not, and answer questions such as 'what if ...?' to show that they really understand what they are learning.
- Reading and writing are taught well and teachers successfully encourage pupils to use these skills in different subjects. Thus, pupils know why it is important to read well and understand what they read, and they gain a greater understanding of the need to write in different styles for different purposes and, where relevant, the need to be mindful of their audience.
- The school's partnership with parents is strong. Parents receive good information about what their children are learning. They support that learning well, for example by hearing their children read and by helping them to find things out about each new topic as it is about to start. Staff build well on this preparatory work.
- Pupils receive frequent and precise written and verbal feedback on their learning, and they are given time to respond to it. In lessons, such feedback is used effectively to adjust learning so that it continues to challenge the pupils at appropriate levels.
- Pupils also learn how to assess each other's work and this is helping them to improve their own work. However, when they write comments on another pupils' work, they sometimes forget to spell accurately, or to use the correct grammar and punctuation.
- Although still under review, assessment systems are fully enough developed to give teachers relevant information about pupils' progress in all subjects. However, teachers do not use them to check how much progress pupils are making during the year in subjects other than English and mathematics. This means that staff do not have a clear picture of where any gaps might be so that they can close them and help pupils reach end-of-year expectations in all subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is outstanding**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. Their regular attendance, confidence and conduct support this view. Pupils are self-assured, well-rounded youngsters who are very proud of their school and their achievements.
- The school prepares its pupils well for the next stage of their education and for life beyond school. Pupils recognise how staff care for each one of them. They talk about how staff encourage them to learn about the 'unique me' so that they understand their strengths and how to recognise when they or others might need more help.

- Pupils have a very strong awareness of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, and when using mobile phones or the internet. They understand what bullying is, and the different forms it can take. They described in detail a project in which they were encouraged to 'make a noise about bullying' and the fun they had spreading the message throughout school.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying, saying, for example, that 'people are too loyal to each other (in this school) to let it happen to anyone'. The school deals quickly and effectively with any incident that might potentially lead to bullying.
- Staff, pupils and parents talk of a 'family feel' and a 'happy school' in which pupils can thrive. Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They talk about what makes Britain and what it means to be British. They talk about why it is important to make everyone feel welcome in their school, including the increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- Pupils are reflective and caring. They understand the principles of equality, saying, for example, that while everyone is equal, some people need extra help to become equal. They are confident that the school provides that help. They consistently demonstrate their confidence in the staff to support them should they have any concerns.
- The school council gives pupils the opportunity to learn about democracy and the importance of making a good contribution to society. In class, pupils take responsibility for different tasks at different times, proving themselves to be willing helpers, ready to support others.
- Pupils understand why it is important to help others. They organise charity events and raise considerable amounts of money for different causes at home and further afield. They appreciate the first aid training they receive at school and understand how it can help them now and in later life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The vast majority of parents, all staff and all of the many pupils with whom the inspector spoke, said that behaviour is at least good.
- Leaders recently changed the school rules so that they became positive rather than punitive. Pupils very much appreciate this approach. They speak with pride about how the new rules are designed to help them develop high standards of self-discipline. The school is successful in helping pupils who have found difficulty with behaviour elsewhere to settle down and begin to learn better.
- Pupils now discuss any less-than-good behaviour in relation to how it damages respect, causes pupils to lose compassion and, for some, compromises their safety. These very mature attitudes stand them in good stead for later life.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning. They respond very quickly to instructions and hardly ever lose concentration in lessons. Their excellent behaviour contributes in great measure to the good progress they are now making as the school continues to improve.
- Attendance is good. Pupils are keen to keep attendance up and enjoy receiving awards through the school's rewards system.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Although broadly typical in most years, pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year because year groups are relatively small and they vary in size and make-up.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Standards have risen in recent years in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. In Year 6 last year, there was a big improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the national average in the grammar, spelling and punctuation tests.
- The work in pupils' books shows good learning across a range of subjects. Pupils benefit from opportunities to use their English and, where appropriate, their mathematical skills in different subjects. For example, they write scientific reports and use their good knowledge of how to collect, use and interpret information in science; they write chronological reports and create timelines in history; and they create graphs and learn to understand coordinates in geography.
- Younger pupils use their good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to help them read and spell. Older pupils, who did not focus as much on phonics learning when they were younger, are benefiting from a spelling programme that has improved the quality of their writing considerably.
- Pupils read well and widely and they enjoy reading. All texts are carefully selected to encourage better reading. Some enable pupils simply to enjoy their books, others contain increasing levels of challenge so that pupils have to use a range of skills to read more difficult words or to find the meaning behind the written words. Pupils rise to these challenges well, and develop good comprehension skills.

- Pupils' handwriting is usually neat and legible. When they mark their own or each other's work, however, they are less careful. Spelling and grammatical errors creep in and writing often becomes untidy. Nevertheless, the writing that they do in literacy and in different subjects is often lively and imaginative and shows their increasing ability to spell accurately and use correct grammar and punctuation.
- Currently, pupils are making most progress in mathematics. They are developing increasingly rapid recall of number facts, including multiplication tables, as they proceed from being rock stars to rock heroes to rock legends and rise to the challenge of reducing the time it takes them to answer 60 questions.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics because they are constantly challenged to think, solve problems and use and apply their mathematical skills in different ways to justify their answers. Thinking skills were pushed to the limit when groups of pupils in the mixed Year 4/5 class worked on different problems. As they did so, they engaged in high-level mathematical discussions that led them to find more efficient ways to solve the problems and check that their answers were correct.
- Pupils also very much enjoy science. They are learning to think scientifically, as young scientists who predict outcomes, carry out investigations and draw conclusions from them. This was evident as pupils in Year 6 explored translucent, opaque and transparent materials. Pupils understand fair testing, and know how to factor in variables so that they can test different hypotheses.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as other pupils. Staff recognise that the range of ability among these pupils mirrors that of other pupils and they plan the pupils' work accordingly. As a result, the gaps between the achievements of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are narrowing.
- Strong leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability ensures that all programmes are carefully targeted and constantly checked for their impact on pupils' learning. This, combined with the astute deployment of well-briefed support staff, helps these pupils to make good progress, too.
- The most able pupils also make good progress. This is because their learning is carefully planned so that they have harder or more in-depth work to do, and are moved on to it earlier in lessons so that they can maximise the time for learning.
- Pupils report that their work is fun but challenging. They enjoy doing it and talk about how they have learned to be 'critical friends' to each other, to help them with their learning. They are prepared well for their work at high school.

Early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management have ensured that, despite changes in staffing, teaching is good and children make good progress. Attainment on entry for this year group was lower than is usual for the school. However, early indications are that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen again, continuing the upward trend of recent years.
- Staff ensure the children's welfare, health and safety at all times. They teach children to handle tools and equipment safely and to keep themselves safe. Children behave well. They follow instructions and adhere to the school's positive values. From the moment they start, they learn the importance of respect, tolerance and compassion towards others. They get along well with each other and with adults.
- The early help that disadvantaged children receive helps them begin to catch up with their classmates. The most able children also receive good support. They have the opportunity to work with pupils in Year 1 to extend their learning and therefore make good progress. Staff also identify children who have special educational needs or disability early. They then set up programmes that help these children, too, to make good progress.
- Staff plan a good range of activities, indoors and out. Children settle well and they go about their learning with commitment. They listen to what they are told and they try hard to do their best.
- Early reading, writing and number skills are developing well. Children are learning to form recognisable letters, write sentences using capital letters and full stops, and use their knowledge of phonics to help them read and spell. They are also beginning to write numerals and number sentences and to add and subtract. Children readily engage adults in conversation and are proud to show and explain their work.
- Adults constantly assess children's learning and use this information to check on their progress. Work in their 'learning journeys' and other books confirms their good progress. It also shows that their learning is built up step by step, each new step determined by what has gone before.
- Occasionally, adults do not interact with the children enough as they learn through play. At these times, their learning is slower than it need be because no one is grasping the moment to move it on.
- The early years team involves parents well in their children's learning. Staff also liaise well with the large number of nurseries and pre-school settings from which the children come. This means children have a settled start and soon learn to follow the well-established routines.

School details

Unique reference number	105688
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10012162

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Crawford
Headteacher	Rachael Bentham
Telephone number	0161 681 6793
Website	www.woodhouses.oldham.sch.uk
Email address	info@woodhouses.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion from minority ethnic groups is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. This includes children in their Reception Year, who are taught alongside pupils in Year 1.
- Privately run before- and after-school clubs operate on the school premises. These are inspected separately.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in 10 sessions. Five visits were made jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also analysed the work in the books of all groups of pupils currently in the school, as well as the school's most recent information about pupils' progress.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Year 1 read and sampled reading in other year groups, as well as sessions where staff were teaching phonics.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, eight members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, the school improvement officer and an external consultant, to gain their views of the school.
- The inspector spoke with a large number of pupils, formally and informally. There were no responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.
- A range of documents relating to school improvement were examined, along with policies and procedures relating to teaching, safeguarding pupils, and provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The inspector took account of the views of the 40 parents who responded to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). She also gained the views of a number of parents at first hand as they collected their children from school.
- The inspector spoke with staff and took account of the views of the 13 members of staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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