

Woodthorpe Primary School

Summerfield Road, Woodthorpe, York, North Yorkshire YO24 2RU

Inspection dates

7–8 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- Leaders have successfully tackled the issues highlighted in the previous inspection. Standards have improved and the quality of teaching is much better. Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is extremely accurate.
- The governing body effectively and rigorously checks the school's performance and holds leaders to account. Governors have high expectations of all the children in the school.
- Leaders and governors are keen to ensure that pupils achieve well academically and also develop as well-rounded individuals.
- The progress made by pupils throughout the school is good. Assessment procedures are consistent and are used with precision. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teaching is good in most classes because staff take account of what pupils already know and can do. Most pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- In some classes, a small minority of the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. They are not moved on quickly enough in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected phonics standard in Year 1 is high.
- Most support staff are deployed well, although a few are not providing effective support at all times.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced but opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural development are sometimes missed.
- The newly implemented religious education curriculum is not fully secure and, as a result, pupils' knowledge of world faiths and other cultures is not developed well enough.
- Most pupils love coming to school. Staff support families well and do all they can to promote regular attendance. However, overall, disadvantaged pupils do not attend as well as others and there are too many who are persistently absent.
- Pupils show a thirst for learning. Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well around school and show respect to adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - precisely planning for an improvement in pupils' knowledge and understanding in religious education and in developing their understanding of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain
 - ensuring that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves, especially those who are persistently absent.
- Improve teaching, learning and the outcomes for pupils by ensuring that all staff:
 - have much higher expectations of all pupils, including the most able in different subjects
 - use classroom-based support staff effectively to support pupils in their lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior leaders are an effective team. Together, they have been successful in raising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection. Following a period of staffing turbulence, pupils, including the most able, are achieving higher standards and making good progress from a wide range of starting points. Parents commented that, 'The new head has made huge improvements and turned this school around' and, 'The school has come on in leaps and bounds in the last two years with the new head and teaching team.'
- There are still challenges to overcome as leaders and governors strive to appoint high-quality staff. Leaders fully recognise the importance of making full-time, permanent appointments and are doing all in their power to do so but with limited success. Some parents have been justifiably concerned about the many staff changes and the number of different teachers their children have had. They feel strongly that this has disrupted their learning.
- Teachers and other staff value the opportunities they have to develop their practice through the professional training and support that the school offers. These include coaching and mentoring from a range of leaders, which have encouraged a culture where teachers are reflective in their practice and open to change.
- A large proportion of the staff who were at the school at the time of the previous inspection stated that the school has improved a great deal since then, though a small number disagree. They explained that this is as a result of the higher expectations placed on them and their pupils, coupled with the development and support they receive from leaders to improve their own practice.
- Leaders use the school's rigorous assessment systems to identify pupils who may be at risk of falling behind in their learning. Strategies put in place to support them are monitored carefully. Supported by governors, leaders have robustly improved and made effective use of appraisal and performance management systems to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good, sometimes exceptional, progress from their starting points because their needs are identified well. The support given to them by the new, but highly skilled, leader for special educational needs is carefully monitored and adapted to help them learn.
- The school has devised a curriculum which plays a valuable role in motivating pupils and enabling them to make rapid progress in their literacy and numeracy. An impressive feature of the school's work is the way that pupils apply their skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics to solve problems in other areas of the curriculum.
- Aspects of the curriculum are also preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain, as pupils show a good understanding of the values of respect, tolerance and democracy. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational for themselves and others. The school's approach helps pupils to develop resilience and supports them in becoming active members of society. The many interesting activities on offer promote the pupils' moral

and social development well.

- Although the overarching curriculum is broad and balanced, there are times when pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to gain an understanding and knowledge of world faiths and the diversity of cultures in modern Britain. As a result, pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is not as developed as it could be. The school knows this, but a new religious education curriculum, in place for a very short time, is not yet fully secure.
- A significant proportion of subject leaders are quite new to their posts but have a growing expertise in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision.
- Leaders and governors have clearly identified the potential difficulties affecting pupils who receive pupil premium funding. They have a clear rationale for the allocation of funds. Leaders and governors have ensured that the pupil premium is well spent. For example, 'children's champions' have been appointed to provide support for disadvantaged pupils and their families, especially in improving the attendance of pupils and reducing the levels of persistent absence. Focused intervention groups have improved pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. As a result, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, make similar progress to, and sometimes better progress than, their peers.
- The additional funds for primary school physical education and sports are well spent. Pupils' participation rates have increased because activities are designed to attract them to a wide range of activities such as tag rugby, dance, multi-skills and gymnastics. More pupils now represent the school in competitive events.

Governance of the school

- The work of the governors of the school is of a high quality. They are a skilled group of individuals who are intensely ambitious for the school and its pupils.
- Governors have a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation which enables them to challenge the school's leaders robustly and hold them to account for pupils' achievements. Their continual and probing questioning of the school's leaders is one of the fundamental reasons why standards at the school have improved.
- The governing body has a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Detailed action plans for the school's improvement provide a solid framework for governors to monitor the school's work. They know their next step is to ensure that the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium continues to improve and that the difference between their attainment and that of others continues to diminish.
- Governors also know they need to evaluate and support further the school's work in raising the attendance of those pupils who are absent most frequently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents speak warmly about the help their children receive from school staff.
- Staff are appropriately trained and have a clear understanding about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. The school works well with outside agencies to support

pupils and their families.

- The school's procedures for the safer recruitment of all staff are stringent. All staff receive a thorough induction process which places emphasis on the culture of safeguarding and equality that the school promotes. Parents, pupils and staff are all in agreement that pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school.
- All school staff, and some governors, have taken part in training to help them protect pupils from extremism and are fully aware of the signs to look out for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved because leaders, and governors, have been uncompromising in their drive to improve. Through regular monitoring, support and coaching of teachers, they have built a culture where teaching staff are now keen to reflect on and develop their practice. There are, however, still a number of temporary staff and there is some unevenness in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers plan work that interests pupils and extends their learning. They monitor and assess the progress that pupils make in lessons and adapt their teaching in the light of their findings. In the very best examples, teachers regularly reorganise groups of pupils to reflect the assessments they make on a daily basis, particularly in their English and mathematics work.
- Teachers also make effective use of assessment and hold regular pupil progress meetings so that they identify quickly any pupils at risk of falling behind and put in place strategies which help them to catch up quickly.
- Teachers use assessment well to track the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. They talk specifically with these pupils about their work and learning and provide additional support, sometimes out of lesson time, to help them. As a result, these pupils are making good progress, especially in writing and mathematics. Occasionally, in a small number of lessons, the most able pupils are confident in their work and continue to over practise simple questions which they can complete with ease. They are not moved on quickly enough and, as a result, make limited progress.
- Teachers make good use of the school's additional adults to support the progress of pupils. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson an additional adult was observed extending pupils' thinking about the diary of the Jewish teenager Anne Frank by using thought-provoking questioning. Most of the additional adults are also skilled in promoting the independence of pupils. They provide support but do not do the work for the pupils. However, a few teaching assistants are not deployed effectively at all times and tend to give pupils the answers rather than supporting them in finding things out for themselves.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to develop lessons that challenge pupils' thinking. In the best practice, there is a thirst for learning which includes both adults and pupils. Teachers skilfully adapt their questioning to help pupils develop as resilient, reflective and inquisitive learners, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- In a very small number of classes there are occasions where pupils are slightly distracted from their learning. This is where teachers' expectations are less clear and

they have set work less suited to pupils' needs.

- Pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are taught to reason well and to talk and write about their learning in some depth. These pupils make links between the skills they learn in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 realise that reading a wide range of different types of fiction and non-fiction books will help them become better writers in the future.
- The secure grounding that pupils receive in phonics means that most pupils spell well. Where spelling is weaker, it is often among older pupils who did not benefit from such a strong start. They are given extra help to support the gaps in their learning.
- Most pupils and parents enjoy the range of independent learning opportunities that the school provides for home learning. When commenting about the half termly 'topic homework' which they receive, one parent wrote: '... both enjoy doing such homework and it gives them a real opportunity to delve more deeply into the relevant topic. My eldest son has especially benefited from this type of homework as it has inspired him to read and write more'. However, some parents and pupils can find this a challenge.
- Parents are very strongly of the view that their children make good progress and are well taught at the school. As a parent said: 'I believe Woodthorpe is a wonderful school. The level of teaching is outstanding. The teachers push the children so they get the best out of them; there is no cap on a child's learning.'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They speak enthusiastically about their learning. They take pride in themselves, their work and their school. Pupils delight in taking additional responsibility, for example as prefects, house captains (and deputy house captains), play leaders or being members of the school council.
- Many pupils of differing ages are able to talk about their learning, reasoning and skills in some depth. This is particularly the case by the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, where a great many pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and a love of mathematics and writing in particular.
- Pupils, parents and staff all feel strongly that pupils are safe at school. The strong relationships seen between pupils and adults enable pupils to feel very confident in sharing worries or concerns. Pupils value their teachers and other staff for being there for them if needed. All pupils know there is a system whereby they can confidently let adults know if they have a worry. They are clear about what bullying is and they say that it is rare.
- Pupils are well aware how to stay safe online and there is also useful information for parents available on the school's website. Pupils are also reminded of their own responsibility to behave well online. Through the curriculum, they are alerted to the wide range of views and information on the internet and encouraged to think about issues of equality and tolerance. 'Bikeability', and visits by the police and fire service, also provides safety information for pupils.

- Most parents appreciate the support they receive from school, both for themselves and their children. Those parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and parents of pupils who have arrived from another school spoke warmly of the time and care afforded to them.
- The school is aware of the need to improve communication further and governors spoke of the expectation of providing a 'learning forum', to enable parents to have a say in the life of their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils live up to the high expectations placed on them by teachers and adults of both their learning and behaviour. They behave very well when moving around the school, at lunchtimes and breaktimes. This extends through the purposeful behaviour of the oldest pupils; for example, as they supported the youngest children in preparing for their nativity production.
- During lessons, pupils respond quickly to the instructions of their teachers. Incidents of disruption or distraction are uncommon. On the few occasions where this does happen, it is because a very small number of teachers have not been clear enough about their instructions and have not matched work well enough to the needs of a small minority of pupils.
- Pupils understand and appreciate the rewards and sanctions system that the school has to help them behave well. This helps those pupils whose behaviour can be challenging so that they join in fully with their peers.
- The attendance of pupils is broadly in line with pupils nationally. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils who have the highest rate of absence is improving, leaders know there is further work to do. Too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across year groups and from a wide range of starting points, pupils currently at the school are making good progress. Many, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are exceeding the progress expected of them.
- Scrutiny of workbooks, observations in lessons and discussions with pupils about their work show that progress has accelerated, particularly in English and mathematics. Where progress is strongest, such as in Years 5 and 6, pupils are learning to reason well and talk about their learning in some depth, including their learning in other areas of the curriculum such as science and history.
- Pupils who are among the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now challenged well in most classes to extend their learning. They say that they enjoy the greater challenge to do better. Most of them, including boys, relish opportunities to write in depth and to explore and deepen their thinking in mathematics. This is reflected in the school's own tracking and in pupils' work in most classes. It shows the proportion of pupils who are now achieving at a higher level is growing, particularly in

mathematics and writing.

- The teaching of phonics is mainly good. However, the school is aware that the proportion of girls reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check significantly exceeds that of boys. The school is already taking action to remedy this by providing additional support and 'boy friendly' books to motivate them and improve their progress.
- By the end of key stage 1, standards in 2016 were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard and at greater depth. However, as a result of improved teaching and the school's own checks on pupils' progress, standards are rising rapidly this year and a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve greater depth.
- After a number of years of inconsistent teaching, in 2016, at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics combined was broadly in line with the national figure. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard for their age was above average in writing and close to it in reading and mathematics.
- Currently, the progress that pupils make is good and by the end of key stage 2 standards are now above those of pupils in schools nationally. The school has tackled the underachievement caused by weaker teaching in previous years and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is faster than it has been in the past. Pupils are prepared well for secondary school.
- The progress made by pupils who are disadvantaged, including those currently at the school, is now improving rapidly across both key stages and in the early years. The most able pupils are also making better than expected progress in mathematics and writing by the end of key stage 2. This is a much better picture than in previous years. It is the result of a much more precise focus on these groups of pupils, and thorough research to ensure that the methods to improve progress used are successful and secured well in all classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to enable them to make good, and sometimes very good, progress from their relative starting points. This is because of the close monitoring of their progress and the effective support they receive from the school's leaders, teachers and other adults. One parent summed up her thoughts by writing: 'The support my child has received from this school has so far been outstanding! My little boy has gone from barely communicating to now being able to read and write and join in with class activities.'
- Pupils read fluently and well, relative to their age and development. Many speak with passion about their reading. Lower-ability pupils are confidently using their phonic skills to sound out unfamiliar words and their understanding of the books is developing well.
- The large majority of parents responding to Parent View and spoken with during the inspection are of the view that their child is making good progress and is well taught.

Early years provision

Good

- In the early years, the high-quality provision found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Children enter the Reception classes with a wide range of skills and previous experiences. Teachers use assessment accurately to quickly identify both those who may need additional help and those who have skills at a higher level. The support they put in place means that these children make good progress.
- In 2014 and 2015, boys reached a good level of development in significantly fewer numbers than girls. This was tackled effectively in 2016 because leaders and teachers adapted their teaching and the curriculum they offer particularly to attract the interest of boys. For example, boys are enjoying learning about stories and exploring their early writing skills, choosing to write on the story map they had created based on 'Dear Zoo' including the range of animals sent by and returned to the zoo because they were unsuitable as pets.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development across the different areas of learning is usually above average but dipped slightly in 2016 due to the nature of the cohort. All evidence seen during the inspection shows that the proportion is likely to rise again this year to be above average and many children are on track to exceed the early learning goals. Children continue to make good progress, which means that they are well prepared for the learning they will meet when they go into Year 1. This is because leaders and teachers have clearly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and have improved the quality of teaching and the range of experiences offered to children.
- The leader of the early years is highly ambitious for all children. Through her drive and enthusiasm, the school is moving to a 'learning in the moment' approach, observing what children know, are curious about and what challenges them. Teachers consider the information they glean from these observations to plan appropriate next steps for the children that will fully develop them across all areas of learning. Children are now highly involved in their learning and grasp new skills quickly and with deeper understanding. The impact of this is closely monitored by governors and senior leaders.
- Children in both Nursery and Reception classes have positive attitudes to learning because they are deeply engrossed in the well-planned activities provided for them. For example, children engaged in storytelling and role play centred on a story about 'Hairy Maclary', by Lynley Dodd, were taking turns listening to each other and talking about the characters in the story.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. Even at this relatively early time in the school year, children were already confidently saying and recognising the sounds they had been learning and were able to use them in their early writing, for example on their story maps. Teachers and other adults consistently model good practice for children to hear and see. The solid grounding children receive in phonics in the early years contributes to the improving proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- In the early years, children are introduced to wide range of exciting, spiritual and cultural experiences. For example, children in Reception produced their own versions of

'The Snail' based on the work of Matisse. They enjoy exploring and experiencing the natural world which also adds much to their independence.

- Children who are disadvantaged, including the most able, make good progress from their different starting points. Sometimes their progress is better than other children in Reception.
- The good behaviour of children and their strong relationships with the adults around them show the confidence and safety they already feel at school. Their parents agreed, feeling strongly that their children are safe, happy and well looked after at school. One parent responded to Parent View writing: 'We love this school. The Reception teachers are so kind and helpful. They have so many interesting methods to teach the kids and are always coming up with new and interesting activities to teach and challenge the children.' Safeguarding is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	121290
Local authority	York
Inspection number	10020994

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Atkins
Headteacher	James McGann
Telephone number	01904 554420
Website	www.woodthorpeprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head.woodthorpeprimary@york.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Woodthorpe Primary is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. The proportion that has an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in all classes. A small number of lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised the work of pupils in all year groups and spoke with many pupils during lessons about their work. The inspectors listened to pupils from different year groups read and gathered views about their experiences at school.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, other leaders, governors and members of the teaching and support staff.
- The views of staff were gathered also from 42 responses from Ofsted's online staff survey.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met formally with a group of pupils to gather their views on their learning and about school. The inspectors spoke informally with many pupils from all year groups during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including the responses of 115 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and many free text comments. Discussions were also held with parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- The inspectors considered documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning, minutes of governing body meetings, records of the monitoring of teaching and information on the management of teachers' performance. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and the exclusion of pupils, were examined.

Inspection team

Steve Bywater, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Randall	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Harper	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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