

The Woodlands Primary School

The Crescent, Woodlands, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN6 7RG

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Turbulence in leadership and inadequate teaching over time have caused pupils' academic standards and their behaviour to decline since the previous inspection.
- Governors have not taken timely and effective action to hold successive leaders to account. As a result, the school has declined and pupils make inadequate progress from their individual starting points.
- Subject leadership is ineffective and underdeveloped. Consequently, too few individuals can be relied on to make necessary improvements.
- There is too much variability in the quality of teaching across the school, including in the early years. Teachers do not effectively check pupils' understanding or provide informative feedback to enable them to make strong gains in their learning and understanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make inadequate progress because their learning needs are not met.
- Leaders' and teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly the most able, are too low. As a result, pupils' writing development and their problem solving and reasoning in mathematics are weak.
- Pupils do not have the necessary skills in reading to allow them to access other areas of the curriculum successfully, or to prepare them well for secondary school.
- Leaders have not targeted the additional funding that the school receives for disadvantaged pupils precisely enough to ensure that these pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Staff do not always deal effectively with poor behaviour in or between lessons.
- Recent actions to improve attendance are not successful. Attendance remains below average and rates of unauthorised absence are too high.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and assistant headteacher have brought much-needed stability. Their actions are beginning to address a legacy of poor educational performance over time.
- Most teaching in early years and key stage 1 is stronger than elsewhere in the school. More pupils are achieving the expected standard in phonics and are reaching the standards expected of them at the end of key stage 1.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all leaders contribute effectively to the monitoring of pupils' progress, in particular by different groups, and use this information to improve pupils' outcomes
 - leaders and governors set high expectations for the achievement of pupils and that they review pupils' performance accurately
 - leaders are focused on making rapid improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in reading and mathematics
 - governors rigorously question the actions taken by leaders and check the effect that this work has on improving outcomes for pupils
 - those with responsibility for improving outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well trained and can check this aspect of the school's work effectively
 - leaders of all subjects know and understand their roles and responsibilities well enough to contribute effectively to school improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that the assessment of pupils' progress is accurate and based on clear evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do
 - ensuring that teachers use the information they keep on pupils' learning and progress to plan work that is appropriately challenging and enables pupils, particularly the most able and those receiving additional support, to make at least good progress
 - making better use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils in their learning
 - providing opportunities for pupils to use and explain their reasoning behind how they solve mathematical problems.
- Increase the proportions of pupils at all stages, including the early years, who attain the highest standards by more accurately identifying all those pupils with the potential to do so.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the early years to ensure that it is consistently good.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving the rates of attendance of all pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, so that they at least match national

averages

- improving pupils' behaviour in and between lessons so that there is no disruption to learning across all classes.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Significant turbulence in leadership and a high turnover of staff have had a detrimental impact on the quality of education and pupils' progress and attendance in recent years. Standards have continued to decline since the last inspection, and pupils' progress remains weak in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Until recently, governors did not act swiftly or decisively enough on their concerns to address significant weaknesses in school leadership. This legacy of underperformance continues to hamper the capacity of the school to improve rapidly. Consequently, pupils are not equipped with the skills they need as they move to secondary school.
- Though the headteacher and the assistant headteacher, who were appointed in late 2016, are making progress, senior and middle leadership remains ineffective. New arrangements for the leadership of English and mathematics to be undertaken by phase leaders are not effective enough, particularly in key stage 2. The leadership of other subjects is non-existent. Consequently, effective arrangements for evaluating the school's work either are too new to have had a measurable impact or are not in place.
- Funding for SEN is not used effectively. Those responsible for improving outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have had limited impact. A thorough review of this provision by the local authority in February 2017 helped the school to identify clear actions to ensure that teaching and support are more closely matched to pupils' specific needs. Despite some recent improvement, these pupils are failing to make adequate progress to reach the standards expected of them. High rates of absence continue to hamper their achievement. Governors do not hold the school to account well enough for making sure that these pupils, including the small number of pupils who attend the off-site provision provided by the local authority, achieve well.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is not having the desired impact. Much of the funding is spent on additional teachers and staff who provide support in the school's inclusion unit, the Orchard, for pupils who have social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs. Although there is some effective practice aimed at increasing pupils' attendance and improving their attitudes to learning, poor leadership renders teachers' efforts ineffective. Leaders are not spending the money effectively, demonstrated by the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school, which remains well below that of other pupils nationally.
- Over time, leaders have not checked the performance of teachers and teaching assistants rigorously enough. This has led to leaders' expectations being too low, and they have failed to identify the most urgent priorities to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. It is too soon for the revised arrangements for managing teachers' performance to have had a consistent and positive impact on improving the quality of teaching or outcomes for pupils.
- Governors and pupils recognise the work of the new headteacher in establishing a more positive and improving environment for the pupils and in promoting equal opportunities. Leaders have introduced a range of training for staff, particularly in the use of a new assessment and tracking system. Despite this, the information provided

by teachers does not accurately measure the attainment or the progress of pupils, as evidenced in pupils' writing and mathematics books. Thus, teachers cannot adequately plan pupils' next steps in learning.

- Leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through assemblies and some specific taught lessons. Pupils have a sound awareness of other faiths and of tolerance of others. The school introduced a broad Woodlands curriculum at the start of this academic year in response to its own evaluation. Pupils are beginning to address big questions in weekly sessions to develop their understanding of democracy and respect for others. Trips to places of interest and visitors to the school, such as the artist in residence, add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of their work. Sporting and extra-curricular activities make an effective contribution to pupils' development.
- The physical education and sport funding grant is appropriately allocated and used to improve the quality of physical education and games, and to increase pupils' participation in competitive sport.
- The local authority is providing intensive support to the school. This advice and the school's collaboration with a highly skilled national leader of education are helping senior leaders to adopt a more coordinated and strategic approach to improving the school. Despite this, improvement in the quality of education provided for pupils is too slow and fragile.
- Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

Governance of the school

- Since before the last inspection, governors have had to respond to significant changes in personnel, in terms of both staffing and the recruitment of interim headteachers. Governors have failed to hold past leaders to account with sufficient rigour and urgency, and this has led to a significant decline in teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Poor performance has not always been challenged effectively. This has led to a legacy of weakness in the ability of middle and senior leaders to drive wider improvement. However, the recent appointment of the new headteacher is now bringing some needed strengths to recover some of the ground that has been lost.
- Governors have failed to ensure that the spending of the pupil premium has been used effectively to diminish the differences in the performance between disadvantaged pupils in school and that of other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's arrangements meet all statutory requirements. The school's policies are up to date, reflecting the latest guidelines. Staff have been fully trained and know the school's procedures well.
- Daily checks take place if pupils do not turn up to school, and are followed up. Referrals to social services are timely. Support from other agencies is secured in times of need to help pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The

family welfare and inclusion worker and safeguarding leads work together to support families quickly in order to avoid escalation of concerns and to reduce risks to pupils' safety and care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Staff turbulence and long periods of staff absence have resulted in too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching within year groups and key stages, and for different groups of pupils.
- Weak assessment procedures mean that the work set by teachers can be too difficult for some pupils, causing them to opt out or become easily distracted. Equally, work can be too easy for other pupils, especially the most able, and these pupils do not progress quickly enough and attain the levels of which they are capable.
- Staff, including those teachers who are at an early stage of their careers, told inspectors that they have received a great deal of training and support in order to implement the wide range of initiatives introduced by senior leaders. Some teachers, however, still lack confidence and are not fully conversant with the new national curriculum in mathematics. There is insufficient focus on reasoning skills and problem solving in mathematics, and pupils struggle to explain and justify their answers.
- Some pupils do not have sufficient reading skills to access some areas of the curriculum. For example, during group work, pupils in Year 6 struggled to read words such as 'façade' and 'bait'. Some pupils encouraged one another to read, but a number of the least able pupils lost interest and became distracted, which slowed their progress further. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, outcomes were lower than expected partly because pupils struggled to identify or understand certain vocabulary or indeed the subject matter in the end of key stage 2 reading test.
- Teachers in key stage 1 have good subject knowledge of phonics and pitch their teaching more accurately than in other areas of the curriculum. Consequently, more pupils now reach the required standard in the end of Year 1 phonics screening check. Older pupils who have not benefited from this expertise struggle more to decode unfamiliar words.
- The quality of teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is too variable. There is a lack of appropriate strategies for teachers who are new to the profession and teaching assistants to support this group effectively. The progress of this group of pupils is not reviewed regularly enough, and assessments of their progress are too vague.
- There are some classes in which pupils are challenged, expectations are higher and pupils are interested in their learning. For example, in both Year 5 classes, pupils enjoy learning about science. In one class, pupils were highly motivated by the teacher's well-designed activity which enabled pupils to work collaboratively to research which planets have no life on them and why. In both classes, strong relationships and the teachers' expertise enabled pupils to work productively together and extend their use of complex, technical vocabulary.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils feel safe and said that they are well cared for. The school works hard with other schools and external agencies to support pupils who have the most complex needs and who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. However, the communication between the school and other agencies is not always recorded formally, and the impact of the support provided for individual pupils is not always clear. For example, the progress and behaviour reports of the few pupils who attend the off-site provision lack sufficient detail to enable leaders to accurately track their progress.
- The support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is ineffective and is having a negative impact on their confidence as learners and in some cases is causing them distress.
- Pupils said that a few pupils use derogatory language in school.
- Most pupils are starting to understand what it means to be a successful learner through the school's recent work on adopting positive attitudes towards their work. They enjoy receiving rewards for their positive achievement.
- Pupils discussed their learning about other cultures and faiths with enthusiasm and showed a mature attitude towards equality issues. Older pupils can define democracy and explain how this affects them in their everyday lives. The school council is just being elected and pupils have few opportunities to show initiative or develop leadership skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- In some lessons, too much learning time is lost while staff attend to pupils' poor behaviour. The headteacher has established a clear behaviour and reward system that is starting to reduce some of the disruption in lessons. Pupils and staff are pleased with the new behaviour expectations, although pupils reported that some misbehaviour persists in class, which distracts them from their work. This is due to pupils switching off because learning is not planned precisely enough to meet their needs.
- The school records incidents of bullying, unkindness and inappropriate behaviour. Senior leaders effectively track and monitor pupils' behaviour to identify trends and causes. Records demonstrate that the number of exclusions has reduced significantly. However, although improving, there are still instances of poor behaviour.
- Pupils are generally well mannered towards adults. Pupils stated that bullying is rare in school and that the new headteacher acts on their concerns swiftly. They are confident that staff would address this if there were an issue. Inspectors also found this to be the case. A few parents, however, expressed concern about how effectively the school deals with bullying.
- Overall, staff work hard to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. Pupils' social development is not as strongly developed as the other three aspects, as

demonstrated by their often boisterous behaviour at lunch and playtimes.

- Despite leaders' best efforts, too many vulnerable pupils miss school more often than they should, and absence remains above the national average. The family welfare and inclusion officer has a good knowledge of the families of these pupils and is slowly building up trust to ensure that the attendance rates improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Over the last three years, pupils' standards have been too low at the end of key stage 2. In 2016, results in reading and in mathematics were far too low and in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. No pupils of lower ability reached the standards expected of them in reading, writing or mathematics. This reflects poor teaching over time.
- Provisional results from the most recent national tests in 2017 demonstrate that, by the end of Year 6, standards in reading and mathematics remain well below those expected. Fewer than 10 pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This includes the high proportion of pupils who were eligible for pupil premium funding.
- In 2016, very few pupils at either key stage 1 or key stage 2 attained the higher standard or were working at greater depth. Provisional results demonstrate that this continues to be the case in reading and mathematics in 2017. This is because leaders do not identify all those who have the potential to attain highly and because work for the most able pupils only rarely presents a real challenge.
- Inaccurate assessment of pupils' work and lack of focus on what pupils should achieve, based on their prior attainment, results in inadequate outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for a significant proportion of pupils. The quality of pupils' handwriting is too variable. Pupils do not routinely take enough pride or care with their written work.
- Across the key stages, pupils, including disadvantaged and middle-ability pupils, make inadequate progress from their starting points. Leaders have not targeted the additional funds from the pupil premium well enough to meet the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them. Consequently, these pupils are not making the accelerated progress required to catch up with other pupils.
- The academic progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities remains too variable and is often weak. Leaders are providing better guidance to classroom staff on how to support these pupils in their work, but staff have yet to act on it consistently. At times during the inspection, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were presented with work they could not do and were not supported well by staff or by specialist resources.
- Weaker readers who read to inspectors can use phonic strategies to sound out unfamiliar words when prompted to do so, but are reading well below their chronological age. Pupils are now reading more regularly in school and a love of reading is being fostered. However, for older pupils, a legacy of underachievement remains. Older pupils struggle with aspects of reading, such as understanding unfamiliar words.
- Inspection evidence shows that, although there have been some recent improvements, particularly in key stage 1, they have not been soon enough or fast enough to enable

pupils to catch up to where they need to be. Scrutiny of pupils' work and learning over time indicates that too few current pupils in key stage 2, including the most able pupils, are on track to make good progress and reach the standards expected for their age. The goals set for pupils have not been challenging enough to ensure that they catch up rapidly from a legacy of underachievement.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good. As a result, too many children in the Reception Year do not make sufficiently good progress in their learning and development from their typically below-average skills and knowledge on entry.
- Staff do not always identify the needs of the most able children and there are few opportunities to stretch middle- and higher-attaining children. As a result, children rarely go on to exceed the early learning goals.
- In some mathematical activities, staff do not provide work that moves children on from what they already knew, slowing the pace of learning. Staff do not always challenge higher-ability pupils to solve problems for themselves or intervene swiftly enough to ensure that these children are writing to the greater depth and quality that they are capable of.
- The early years pupil premium funding is used effectively and, as a result, the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development is improving well and they make strong progress.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and is taking action to improve the quality of teaching across Nursery and Reception classes.
- Phonics is well taught and children are developing secure reading skills in readiness for Year 1. During the inspection, pupils were reading words and identifying sounds containing the 'mm' phoneme.
- A wide range of interesting, effectively planned activities and experiences are on offer inside and outdoors in both Nursery and Reception. The environment ensures that each area of learning is catered for. For example, the mud kitchen helps children to develop their ideas and language creatively. They were seen to thoroughly enjoy buying ingredients, counting and understanding how to use money. Children quickly learn to manage their own learning and they understand the mantra, 'Choose it, use it, put it away.'
- Relationships between adults and children are strong. Children settle in quickly and soon get accustomed to routines. They behave well and know the boundaries and respect them. The focus on developing children's language and communication skills helps children to express their ideas with adults and their classmates successfully.
- The early years leader makes sure that all welfare requirements are met and children are safe. Children grow in confidence and self-esteem during their time in Woodlands and are prepared effectively for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	134236
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10036542

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	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Stephen Gardner
Headteacher	Mrs Jane White
Telephone number	01302 722367
Website	www.woodlandsprimary.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	head@woodlandsprimary.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school has undergone considerable change since the previous inspection. The new headteacher took up her role in September 2016, as did the full-time assistant headteacher. New middle leaders for aspects of the school curriculum have been appointed since then, and the roles and responsibilities of staff have changed too.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is around that seen nationally. A small number of these pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception classes and part-time

places for children in the Nursery.

- A very small number of pupils attend off-site provision provided by the local authority.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school receives support from the local authority and a national leader of education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook a series of short, focused visits to classrooms and longer lesson observations in each class. A number of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited the school's inclusion unit, the Orchard.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, pupils, parents and two representatives from the local authority.
- Documentation relating to the school's website and safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks, was scrutinised.
- The schools' self-evaluation, plans for improvement and analysis of current pupils' attainment and progress were evaluated.
- Pupils' work in different subjects was scrutinised alongside senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read individually.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- The views of pupils were considered through the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account the 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 responses from staff to the online survey. Inspectors also took into account the responses to the school's own surveys of parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Cathy Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Simon Bissett	Ofsted Inspector

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