

Woodlands Primary School

Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire TF7 5HX

Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his leadership team provide strong, direct leadership and show an unwavering determination and aspiration to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors know the school well, including its many strengths and those areas that need to improve further. Along with school leaders, their efforts to improve continuously the quality of education across the school are proving effective.
- Phonics teaching is highly effective. By the end of Year 1, almost all pupils are able to use their phonic skills well to help them read. Across the school, the teaching of reading is now more effective. The pupils' ability to understand and make sense of texts has improved.
- Across key stage 2, evidence in pupils' books shows that they are making more progress than in the past. More pupils are working at the standard expected for their age. However, pupils' rates of progress and outcomes need to improve further to be in line with those seen nationally.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment information to help pupils make good progress.
- Standards of presentation in pupils' books are consistently high across the school.
- Pupils are generally polite and behave well. They are friendly and tolerant towards each other.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is good, and teachers generally have high expectations about what the pupils can achieve. Teachers mostly plan tasks that are well matched to the pupils' needs. Sometimes, however, the most able pupils are not challenged to make as much progress as they could, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers and other adults work well together to support pupils' learning effectively. They use skilful questioning to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Children in the early years get off to a flying start and make very good progress from their individual starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. However, some subject areas are not fully developed.
- The school provides a safe and nurturing environment for all pupils. Pupils' individual needs are well catered for. This includes pupils with a wide range of academic, and social and emotional needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - Ensuring that pupils' gain knowledge, skills and understanding across a wider range of subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
 - outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are at least in line with those seen nationally by ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils make good or better progress from their individual starting points
 - the most able pupils are consistently challenged, especially in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher demonstrates a strong commitment, drive and determination to ensure that pupils get the best possible start in life. All leaders, governors and staff share this strong sense of purpose and ambition.
- The headteacher has built a strong leadership team, each member of which brings a high degree of skill and knowledge to their role. Together with governors, the leadership team demonstrates a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement. As a result of a focus on continual school improvement, the quality of teaching and learning is strong, and pupils are well supported to make good progress from their starting points.
- The headteacher has the confidence of staff who are overwhelmingly positive in their support of the school and of school leaders. Staff feel valued and part of a strong team and they are proud to be members of the school community.
- The headteacher has high expectations for everyone, and there are clear performance management systems in place to help ensure that improvements are made and targets are achieved. Leaders at all levels make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. They use this information to identify what the school needs to do next to improve further. To support developments, staff have access to a range of effective training and development opportunities, both in school and externally.
- The school has secure systems in place to identify and assess pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their needs are addressed in a variety of ways, including high-quality teaching, extra support in class and specialist interventions from school staff. The impact of additional support is tracked carefully to ensure that the input is effective in helping the pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Activities are adapted as necessary. Additional funding to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well managed.
- Support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs is a real strength of the school. All pupils benefit from the school's nurturing and supportive environment and the effective support provided by the pastoral team. Provision for the minority of pupils who have a range of significant and complex needs is effective in helping pupils to access full-time education and to make progress. The pastoral team also provides helpful guidance for parents.
- Leaders use the pupil premium grant funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively across the school and that they have opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness of the barriers to learning and the challenges that this group of pupils face. As a result, more disadvantaged pupils are working at the standard expected for their age across the school, and rates of progress are improving.
- The school has a large number of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year. The needs of pupils who are new to the school are quickly assessed to ensure that any gaps in knowledge are addressed or to enable them to access additional input

as required.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively to improve pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, sport. More pupils now take up the opportunity to attend an after-school sports club, and many pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, take part in sporting events and competitions with local schools. Training for staff, provided by specialist coaches, is increasing the quality of PE teaching across the school. This will help to ensure that pupils access the full PE curriculum.
- Leaders and staff make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values, such as democracy and tolerance, are taught alongside the school's values that are known as 'secrets of success' and include 'don't give up', 'try new things', 'work hard' and 'understand others'. The school environment is rich in displays and opportunities to celebrate all aspects of pupils' developments, such as artwork, links with a Kenyan school and charity events. Pupils also learn about a range of different faiths and cultures. As a result of these opportunities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum is organised around different themes and includes opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. For example, in Year 2, the 'let's remember' topic includes the opportunity for pupils to learn about the First World War through writing about the life of a soldier. Wherever possible, the curriculum is also adapted to take account of pupils' interests and to increase their level of engagement. For instance, Year 3 boys were motivated to write because they were learning about monster trucks.
- Trips and visitors to school further enhance the school's curriculum. For example, some pupils spoke enthusiastically about a Paralympian who had inspired them during a school assembly, while others had been motivated by a visit to a university campus. Pupils also benefit from having access to a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities such as choir, arts and crafts, cooking, dance and a range of sports.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and covers all areas of the national curriculum. However, because leaders have rightly focused on English and mathematics, some other aspects of the curriculum are less well developed. Leaders recognise that more needs to be done to provide a curriculum that supports the teaching and learning of key skills linked to particular subjects, for instance music and modern foreign languages.
- The great majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school. They particularly value the commitment shown by staff to ensuring that all pupils are well looked after in school.

Governance of the school

- Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's many strengths and areas for improvement. They fully support leaders' work to provide effective and comprehensive support for pupils who have additional needs. They have clear oversight of the allocation of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Governors are knowledgeable about the impact

that this funding is having on the progress and attainment of vulnerable pupils.

- Governors provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the school leadership team. They use information gathered through visits to school, as well as from reports by the school's external adviser and those provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions in order to bring about improvements. They ensure that performance management processes are in place and that these processes are effective at securing improvements in teaching and learning.
- The governing body takes its safeguarding duties seriously. The newly appointed safeguarding link governor has recently completed training to enable her to fulfil this role effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping children safe is central to the work of the school, and leaders have created a culture where all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.
- All staff have regular and appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe, and they are vigilant in looking out for indicators of risk or harm. Leaders also have a clear understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school.
- The safeguarding team maintains the required confidential records and, when appropriate, the team shares information with relevant external agencies. Leaders follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults appointed to work at the school.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They are taught how to keep safe online. Pupils are confident that any issues raised will be quickly resolved.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching and learning across the school is consistently good. Teachers make their expectations of pupils very clear and, as a result, pupils are focused on learning, join in enthusiastically and behave well. Teachers model activities well and expect pupils to use the correct vocabulary when talking or writing about a topic.
- Pupils take a pride in their work and their books reflect the high standards for presentation set by the teachers. Pupils are clear about the expected learning in each lesson and respond well to feedback that they receive from teachers.
- Teaching assistants and learning mentors are deployed across the school to support pupils' learning. They work closely with classroom teachers to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding and to deepen their thinking, for example, by asking, 'Tell me more' or 'What do you mean by that?'

- Teachers are enthusiastic and learning opportunities are engaging in all classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that use a range of strategies to stimulate pupils' interest and curiosity. Teachers plan effectively for all groups of pupils, taking into account their different starting points. However, occasionally the most able pupils are not challenged to complete work to a consistently high standard or the task does not give them the opportunity to fully develop or apply their skills, for example, in mathematics.
- Phonics teaching is a strength of the school. There are clear routines in place and sessions are engaging. Pupils are able to apply their phonics skills to read new and unfamiliar words.
- After a dip in reading results in 2016, leaders introduced a different approach to teaching this subject. This is successfully improving standards. Teachers engage pupils through exciting and imaginative texts. Pupils also benefit from a range of structured approaches that improve their reading fluency and their comprehension skills. These are helping pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly at home and this is well supported by many parents.
- The quality of pupils' writing is strong across the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and across a range of subjects, for instance, writing a letter to the parish council about a technology project or recording predictions and conclusions during a science lesson. Pupils demonstrate a developing use of grammar and punctuation skills.
- Teachers plan mathematics lessons that enable pupils to develop their problem-solving skills and their ability to complete calculations fluently and accurately. The majority of pupils show perseverance and resilience in completing these tasks.
- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt their planning and to identify any additional support necessary. Leaders and teachers compare samples of work with colleagues both in school and from other schools. This helps everyone to reach a common understanding about the expected standards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's nurturing environment promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Each classroom includes a range of displays to support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Regular celebration assemblies acknowledge pupils' successes, whether they are for academic achievement or demonstrating the school's 'secrets of success'.
- Pupils have many opportunities to make a contribution to school life and the wider community, for instance, raising money for charities such as 'Children in Need'. Pupils have the opportunity to take on a range of school-wide responsibilities, such as being on the eco-committee, acting as school council representatives and play leaders or as part of the Woodlands safeguarding team. Pupils take these roles seriously and are proud to undertake them. These opportunities are helping to prepare the pupils well

for the next stage in their education.

- Pupils demonstrate a high level of compassion and tolerance for one another. For example, pupils have an awareness that some of their classmates have additional needs and might need extra support. One older pupil summed this up by saying, 'It doesn't matter what people are like. You should treat them the same way as you would want to be treated.'
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They understand what bullying is and the various forms that it may take, including cyber-bullying. They are clear that incidents of bullying in school are rare and they are confident that an adult will deal with any concerns quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's behaviour policy is generally effective and focuses on motivating the pupils to behave well. Pupils and staff understand the policy and pupils said that teachers use it consistently. Behaviour in classrooms is generally of a high standard, and most pupils are keen to learn. There is a sense of order and calmness throughout the school. When an incident of poor behaviour does occur, adults deal with it effectively and any disruption to learning for other pupils is minimised. School behaviour records show that adults are consistent in tackling negative behaviours and that the number of serious behaviour incidents, resulting in pupils being excluded from school, have reduced.
- School attendance levels have improved for almost all groups of pupils and they are now similar to those seen nationally. The school's two 'walking buses' have proved very effective in reducing the numbers of pupils arriving late in the morning, and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent has also reduced. Leaders track attendance carefully and promptly follow up any absence. They work effectively with families who are struggling to get their children into school. Leaders are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and work with external agencies to minimise any risk.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Evidence in pupils' books and displays around the school indicate that the majority of pupils across the school are currently making good progress. Many are working at the standard expected for their age across reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged. The evidence supports leaders' views that rates of progress and outcomes are improving.
- In 2016 and 2017, almost all pupils met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Due to consistently high-quality phonics teaching, the progress of current Year 1 pupils is also very strong.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are at least in line with those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the case for pupils achieving the standards expected for their age and for those attaining the higher standards.

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the end of key stage 2 tests for reading, writing and mathematics was lower than expected. Provisional information for 2017 shows that more pupils have reached the standard expected for their age, and the gap between the school's outcomes and those seen nationally has reduced for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Further increasing pupils' outcomes and rates of progress across key stage 2 is a priority for the school.
- Rates of progress and outcomes for pupils who have been in school for an extended period are higher than for those who have recently arrived.
- Pupils' outcomes in science are at least in line with those seen nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- The small numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress from their starting points. Their outcomes are in line with those of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to their individual starting points. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully, adapting support and intervention according to need.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Many children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are well below the level that is typical for their age. However, for the last four years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average. This represents very strong progress, and the majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
- The children are very well cared for and they are confident and eager to join in activities. Children's behaviour is good and they show respect for each other. Both Nursery and Reception children play cooperatively, sharing resources and discussing their activities.
- Children respond well to instructions from adults. The children know and follow clear classroom routines so that little learning time is wasted.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and welfare requirements are met fully.
- The early years leader has a very good knowledge of the children and, together with her team, regularly monitors children's progress. Teachers then plan activities to move children's learning forward or to address any gaps in their understanding.
- Adults take every opportunity to maximise learning time, such as practising counting to 10 with a group of Nursery children during snack time. Adults are also very skilful at developing children's vocabulary through modelling and effective questioning. For instance, a child who was holding a giant snail was able to use the words 'slimy' and 'slither' in response to an adult's questions.
- The teaching of early literacy skills through phonics is effective. Children are accurately taught how to recognise the sounds that letters make and blend these together to make words. Children are beginning to write independently.

- Mathematics activities support children's early number development alongside work on shape, space and measures. For example, a small group of children threw beanbags into a hoop, counted them and then recorded the total. Another group dropped cars down a drainpipe and used blocks to measure how far they travelled along the ground.
- The curriculum is based around a range of learning projects, which arise from motivational objects, experiences that adults offer or directly from children's interests. These projects enable children to respond to their emerging ideas and test their beliefs in a variety of ways. The majority of children show resilience by focusing on a task for an extended period, even when working independently. During the inspection, inspectors observed mathematics activities linked to the story 'Pumpkin Soup', science experiments using blocks of ice, and creative activities such as building tall structures and filming a play scene. Together, these opportunities provide a rich and engaging curriculum that develops all aspects of children's learning.
- Early years staff are welcoming and encourage regular communication with parents. This includes a home visit before the children start school and a visit to any previous early years setting. These actions are effective in building confidence and ensuring that the children settle quickly. Staff record children's progress in individual learning journals that they regularly share with parents. Parents can contribute to these journals through 'weekend wows'. Parents are also encouraged to attend termly 'stay and learn' sessions and to join the children for lunch. An 'early learners' toddlers' group takes place weekly to build relationships with parents and younger children.
- The early years learning environment, both indoors and outside, is well resourced and effectively supports all areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	135031
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10043153

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	452
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Max Jones
Headteacher	Mr John Demmerling
Telephone number	01952 386070
Website	www.woodlands-sch.co.uk
Email address	woodlands.primary@telford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2013

Information about this school

- Woodlands Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. The school has two classes per year group from Year 1 to Year 6. The school also runs an early years unit. Children attend part time in the Nursery, from the term before their third birthday, and full time in one of the two Reception classes.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through their primary school education is higher than average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for pupils' achievement and progress, in 2016.

- The governing body manages the school's breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 27 lessons or small-group sessions. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils and listened to some pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to pupils formally and informally. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with the school's external school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records relating to safeguarding and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school performance data and the school's website.
- Inspectors considered parents' opinions through scrutinising 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including four free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke to parents on the first day of the inspection.
- Twenty-three responses to the staff questionnaire were considered as part of the inspection.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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