

# Woodlands Primary School

Higham School Lane, Hunt Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4BB

## Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have successfully merged the two predecessor schools to create a happy and vibrant primary school with a strong caring ethos.
- The headteacher has high expectations of her staff. The leadership team has been relentless in ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the newly formed school is good. There is an ambitious learning culture embedded throughout the school.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Pupils learn early reading skills well.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and next steps for the school. They provide leaders with well-focused support and challenge.
- The curriculum is broad and exciting. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the many enrichment activities that are available to them.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects and have a positive impact on improving teaching and outcomes. A review is under way to deliver a better sequence of learning in subjects such as geography and design and technology.
- Pupils behave well. They have excellent manners and are eager to learn.
- Current pupils are making good progress in a wide range of subjects. Attainment at the expected standard is above average. However, sometimes, work is too easy for the most able pupils, including in the early years.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support and achieve well from their starting points.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe. They are deeply respectful of difference.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are well cared for. They know that adults will always listen to them if they have any concerns or worries.
- Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. They value the well-rounded education that their children experience.
- Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress. However, leaders know that the youngest disadvantaged pupils in the school could make more progress.
- Children in the early years have a good start to their learning. They behave well and are keen to learn. However, sometimes, adults do not know when and how to best interact and intervene to support children's learning further.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further strengthen teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan work in subjects other than reading and writing that consistently challenges the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged
  - improving the quality of adults' interactions and questioning in the early years
  - building pupils' skills systematically across the wider curriculum.
- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in the early years.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher has skilfully and considerately led the successful merger of the junior and infant schools. The staff team works well together, sharing common goals and values. The school's code of conduct – 'Respect, care and consideration' – permeates all aspects of school life.
- Leaders know the school well. They have carefully considered how best to pull together the strengths of both schools following the amalgamation. They use their sharply focused monitoring and evaluation to prioritise actions and areas for further development.
- Staff are complimentary about the work of leaders and morale is high. Leaders have high expectations of staff which are clearly communicated through the 'Woodlands essential' document. This has resulted in consistent approaches towards the planning of teaching and the assessment of learning across the newly formed school. Leaders carefully track the progress of pupils so that they have a good understanding of which pupils need additional support.
- Leaders know that professional development is focused on the right things because of their effective checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders provide good-quality feedback and support to staff about how to improve their practice further. Support for teachers new to the profession is first-rate and personalised.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable, proactive and positive. They experience effective training which supports them in contributing greatly to the improving teaching in the subjects that they lead. They have an accurate view of the strengths and areas of need. As a result, they give accurate and useful information to teachers on how to improve practice further.
- Leaders at all levels are very reflective on the most suitable use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the best possible progress across the curriculum. The strategy is well planned, reviewed and adapted. As a result, more disadvantaged pupils are starting to reach the higher standards in learning.
- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the needs of individual pupils with SEND and, as a result, effective interventions and adaptations are in place. Leaders have ensured that the staff team is knowledgeable about the learning needs of pupils, academically, socially and emotionally.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to many enrichment opportunities to develop their love of learning and build their resilience. For example, Year 6 pupils had just returned from a residential trip where they experienced many activities that took them out of their comfort zones. Music and performance have a high priority in the school, with the senior choir having just won a local competition against other schools. Effective links are made across subjects. For example, pupils are able to apply the skills that they have learned in mathematics to science. Leaders are developing the curriculum further. They are aware that the progression of skills and knowledge in some subjects, such as geography and design and technology, is not as well planned.

- Leaders ensure that pupils develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally through a carefully planned curriculum. For example, a recent visit to Parliament has ensured that pupils have a sound understanding of democracy. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors use the additional funding for primary physical education (PE) and sport very effectively. Teachers' skills have been developed well in areas such as the teaching of gymnastics, rugby and orienteering. Leaders have responded swiftly to a low proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in swimming by the end of key stage 2 in 2018 by increasing the core offer of swimming lessons. Pupils have access to a high-quality curriculum that incorporates a wide range of sporting activities. Pupils explained to inspectors the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They especially enjoy the many opportunities that they have to participate in competitive sports with other schools and the inter-house competitions that they have on sports day.
- The vast majority of parents are very pleased with how the school is run. As one parent wrote:

'Woodlands clearly has a caring and nurturing ethos and this, coupled with an excellent standard of teaching, has provided an excellent platform for our children's education.'

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have been instrumental in the successful merger of the two schools and are very ambitious for the future of Woodlands Primary. The effective decisions they have made about the amalgamation have made a positive contribution to the smooth running and effectiveness of the school.
- Governors bring a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge to the school. They are able to ask pertinent and challenging questions of leaders.
- Governors monitor the effectiveness of the school well. They are very knowledgeable about the school because they visit often to check on school improvement and to talk to staff and pupils. They review the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well.
- Governors ensure that their statutory duties are met. For example, the safeguarding governor attends training and carries out regular visits to examine pre-employment checks and monitor that effective safeguarding systems are in place and followed.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a culture of vigilance in the school and relationships are strong. Pupils know who to go to if they have a worry and express confidence that adults will always listen to them.
- Staff are clear on how to report any concerns that they have about a child because they are trained well to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. Induction of staff and volunteers is thorough. When concerns are raised, leaders' actions are effective. Record-keeping is detailed. The designated leader for safeguarding works well with

external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need.

- Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of all adults who work or volunteer in the school are fully in place.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Since the amalgamation, leaders and teachers have worked hard to ensure that there are consistent approaches to teaching, learning and assessment across the school. For example, the teaching of handwriting is now uniform across the school, with regularly good presentation across all ages.
- Staff have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils. Pupils work hard in their lessons and concentrate well. Classrooms are a hive of activity, with pupils focused on learning and improving. Pupils say that teachers help them well when they are struggling with new learning.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is effective. High-quality texts are used well in lessons to develop pupils' love of reading and enjoyment of stories, as well as their inference and prediction skills. Because of well-considered teaching, younger pupils can accurately link sounds and letters and can blend them well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly both in and out of school. Outcomes in reading are high.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Newly introduced teaching strategies to increase pupils' ability to reason and problem-solve have resulted in pupils being able to apply their knowledge to a wide range of situations. For example, in Year 6 workbooks, pupils were able to apply what they had learned about line graphs in mathematics to displaying the results of an experiment in science.
- Nevertheless, sometimes, work is too easy for the most able pupils. This was true in subjects from the wider curriculum, as well as in mathematics. This resulted in some pupils making less progress than they should.
- Teachers set homework that focuses specifically on the basic skills of reading, spelling and multiplication tables. This ensures that pupils regularly practise these important aspects of learning.
- Staff have created attractive classrooms with high-quality displays and learning prompts. For example, in a Year 3 class, there was a 'misconceptions wall' which gave pupils helpful reminders on what they were currently learning. Pupils said this 'helped them remember the tricky bits'.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, especially for pupils with SEND. Teaching assistants are well trained, including in supporting pupils with social and emotional needs. Teaching assistants are very aware of the next steps that pupils are working on and how best to support them to achieve these.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of diversity and equality. The Woodlands code of conduct – Respect, care and consideration – is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils explained how girls and boys have fair access to all elements of school life, stating, 'Nobody judges anybody. You can join in with what you want.'
- A recent assembly led by the school council, about the importance of limiting sugar in the diet, has resulted in pupils being very aware of what they are eating. Pupils passionately explained to an inspector how their packed lunches contained not too much sugar as they were keen to eat a healthy diet. Pupils partake in many physical activities, including the much-loved daily mile run, cross-country races and a recent swimming gala. Pupils' emotional safety and mental health are important drivers for leaders and strong features of the curriculum. As a result, pupils know that an active body and mind are key to a healthy lifestyle.
- The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. For example, Year 6 pupils had just attended a workshop on road and railway-line safety. Pupils' understanding of e-safety is thorough, including the importance of not sharing personal passwords with anyone, not even friends. Parents receive regular and useful tips and prompts on e-safety in the weekly newsletters.
- Pupils are keen to be active citizens for their local community. For example, pupils told an inspector about how they have recently made a difference through joining an organised litter pick. Pupils have a strong awareness of the environmental impact of human life and are keen to consider minimising the plastic use in the school.
- Bullying is rare at Woodlands Primary. Pupils know that, if bullying were to occur, staff would quickly stop it.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a calm and organised place to learn. Pupils are polite and confident.
- Pupils concentrate well in lessons and try their best in all aspects of school life. They listen well to each other and respect what others have to say. The atmosphere in classrooms is purposeful.
- Pupils play well together in the playgrounds. Older pupils enjoy the roles of peer mediators and playground pals, helping sort out any issues for younger pupils. They talk positively about the merger of the two schools and how this has allowed them to do this, stating that, 'We think about how we treat others at Woodlands.' Behaviour in the lunch hall was respectful, with children sitting chatting to their friends while enjoying their food.
- Pupils enjoy school and are rarely absent. Attendance is higher than the national average for primary schools. Leaders have had success lately in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. They now attend school as regularly as their

classmates.

- Leaders analyse any incidents of poor behaviour well to ensure that any patterns are quickly noticed and that provision can be swiftly adapted to prevent further incidents. These records show a sharp decrease in reported incidents.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Since the school opened in 2016, pupils' rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 have been in line with national averages.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, and the higher standard in writing, by the end of key stage 2 are higher than those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard in mathematics increased in 2018 to be close to the national average. Nevertheless, observations of learning and work in pupils' books show that the most able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should. This is because work is sometimes too easy in mathematics and subjects across the wider curriculum, such as geography and design and technology. Leaders are currently refining the curriculum to enable pupils to make stronger progress in developing their subject-specific skills.
- Pupils with SEND are making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Differences in the rates of progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils are reducing successfully. Leaders are highly ambitious for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. An increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Published performance information showed that, in 2018, in key stage 1, boys' attainment was lower than that of boys nationally at the expected standard. Leaders have responded well to remedy this and work in pupils' books shows that most boys, as well as girls, are making rapid gains in their learning and making good progress from their starting points.
- Since the merger of the two schools, leaders have taken decisive action to improve the accuracy of the outcomes for all pupils in key stage 1. Attainment at key stage 1 in 2018 was close to national figures.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children start school in the early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly lower than those typical for their age, especially in reading, writing and listening. Current school assessment information and observations show that most children make good progress in the early years.
- Since the merger of the two schools, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development has risen. In 2018, this was in line with the national figure.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths in the early years, as well as the areas that need further development. Despite the pupil premium strategy focusing carefully on the outcomes and provision for this group of children, disadvantaged pupils

in the early years do not always make enough progress.

- Teaching pays good attention to children's interests. Adult-led activities provide new ideas to children well, building on what they have already learned and understood. However, during visits to lessons, inspectors observed that some adults are not always alert to children's learning when deciding when and how to interact. Adults did not always value a child's independent activity, interrupting a child's play unnecessarily. Good-quality interactions with children do not take place consistently.
- Relationships are strong. Children show good collaborative skills and listen well to instructions. They share resources effectively. For example, children were independently using a sand timer to wait patiently for their turn to perform on the stage or ride on a bicycle. Routines are well established. Consequently, children feel secure because they know exactly what is expected of them.
- Parents appreciate the care and attention shown by staff and how much they are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. The recent introduction of home visits has resulted in strong relationships, with children settling quickly into their new environment. Workshops on phonics and reading and regular 'stay and play' sessions help parents support their children effectively at home.
- Children are cared for well. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are effective and that all welfare requirements are met.

## School details

Unique reference number	142834
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088086

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	652
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Minton
Headteacher	Mary Priestley
Telephone number	01732 355 577
Website	<a href="http://www.woodlands.kent.sch.uk">www.woodlands.kent.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@woodlands.kent.sch.uk">office@woodlands.kent.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Woodlands Primary School opened in September 2016, following the amalgamation of Woodlands Junior School and Woodlands Infant School. The former junior school was deemed to be outstanding in May 2011 and the former infant school was deemed to be good in June 2014.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly lower than the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in classrooms. Teaching was observed jointly with a senior leader. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books covering a range of subjects, attainment and year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator and leaders with responsibility for early years, mathematics, English, music and PE. Inspectors also met with different groups of staff, including a group of newly qualified teachers and a group of subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and considered their views of the school. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes. They considered 145 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. An inspector also heard pupils read.
- The 115 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were scrutinised, along with the 70 free-text responses. Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day. They also took note of 54 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- A wide range of the school's own information and documentation was studied, including: leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance; the school improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; information about pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance; and several key school policies. Inspectors considered a further range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding and the recruitment of staff.

## Inspection team

Lea Hannam, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirstine Boon	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Keen	Ofsted Inspector

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