

Inspection of a good school: Woodhouse Community Primary School

Walker Drive, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6QW

Inspection dates:

19–20 November 2019

Outcome

Woodhouse Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this welcoming school. They say that they feel safe. They generally get on well with each other and when they don't, adults help them to sort out their problems.

The new headteacher makes sure that all staff have high expectations for every child. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In assemblies, pupils earn rewards for good attendance and for reading books. They enjoy competing with each other in the reading league. Attendance has started to improve.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They say that bullying does not happen. Sometimes, pupils argue and fight over games of football. They say they learn to 'let it go' and move on, by adults helping them through the school's restorative programme for behaviour.

Staff go the extra mile to help families in need by getting them support. Pupils say that they feel reassured that they can join the nurture group. They trust adults in school to teach them the skills they need to cope with life outside school.

Leaders make sure that pupils read and write often. However, some younger pupils find reading and writing too hard. This is because they are not given the correct reading books. Adults do not always correct pupils' mistakes in handwriting. This is particularly the case in key stage 1.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Standards have declined since the previous inspection. Too many pupils have not achieved as well as they should.

The new headteacher knows what needs to be done to improve standards. Leaders have designed plans for what pupils will learn in each subject of the curriculum. Teachers organise lessons such as those in English so that pupils build on what they know. Most subjects follow this approach. In some subjects such as geography, the sequencing of learning is not as well developed. For example, pupils in key stage 1 learn about the continents before they understand enough about the United Kingdom. In Year 5 and Year 6, teachers develop pupils' memory well. Throughout lessons, pupils revisit the features of a rainforest. As a result, they can remember where the rainforests are in the world. Staff help pupils with SEND to learn about rainforests at the same level as other pupils. Children in early years develop a good understanding of the world. They visit a copse in the school grounds to collect leaves and twigs. They create paintings of leaves changing colour. Through lessons, pupils discuss moral issues such as saving the rainforests.

Leaders know that reading is a subject that needs to improve, so it has a high priority. Standards in reading have been low. Adults read books to pupils throughout the day. They encourage pupils to read by sharing their own favourite books. There is a league table where children compete to see who can read the most books. However, pupils who are using phonics to learn to read are not given the right books to help them. Therefore, some pupils do not make good progress. Staff support pupils with SEND well, but some adults who help pupils do not prompt them to write letters correctly or to hold their pencil in the best way. This does not help pupils to write clearly. The youngest children pick up reading skills from the start of Reception. Some adults ask children to look at the pictures rather than the letters and sounds in the words. This does not help pupils to work out unfamiliar words.

Plans in science ensure that pupils in key stage 1 learn about the seasons and the weather. Revisiting the words used to describe the seasons is helping pupils to remember them. Pupils learn the skills of working scientifically. But pupils in Year 1 are required to set out their work in a similar way to pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. This does not help them to learn the scientific skills appropriate for their age. Some subject leaders have only been in post for a short time, so they have not had time to make all the necessary changes to the revised curriculum.

Pupils take part in musical performances in the local community and at Sage Gateshead, for example, by singing carols at Christmas in a local care home for the elderly. There is a wide range of after-school clubs that the pupils attend. These opportunities help pupils develop into confident, active and healthy citizens.

Pupils' attendance is closely monitored. All absences are quickly followed up. Attendance has started to improve.

Children play together well in early years. Children enjoy learning the letters and sounds they need to be able to read. They choose picture books to read and re-tell stories. Staff are caring. They take the children out of school to learn about, for example, fire safety at the local fire station.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils well and can quickly spot any problems. They provide up-to-date training. Members of staff are vigilant about current safeguarding concerns in the local area. Staff are confident about using the school's systems to report concerns.

Leaders work with different professionals so that pupils are well supported. The governing body checks that all information about the suitable recruitment of staff is in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Books that some pupils read and practise are not always pitched correctly. Sometimes they include words and sounds that pupils have not yet learned. This means that some pupils' reading books are too hard. When this happens, pupils struggle to read words and understand their meaning. This is hindering their progress. Leaders need to make sure that teachers select books that are phonically decodable, focusing on the sounds that pupils have learned.
- The revised curriculum has been planned well. However, it is at the very early stages of implementation. Leaders know that further modifications are needed to ensure that sequences of learning are planned to have a positive impact on learning. The plans for some foundation subjects are less effective. Leaders and teachers should ensure that the curriculum for science and geography in key stage 1 is implemented better. They should make sure that children and pupils gain strong subject-specific knowledge and skills, which they can apply and deepen over time.
- In key stage 1, adults who support pupils' learning correct misconceptions in spelling at the point of teaching. However, they do not consistently address incorrect letter formation or support pupils to use an effective pencil hold, so that pupils can write clearly. Leaders should make sure that all adults are supporting pupils to gain the basic skills needed for reading and writing.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that the initiatives designed to reduce persistent absenteeism and improve attendance continue to be embedded.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	131919
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10110773
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Valerie Hindmarch
Headteacher	Rachael Smith
Website	www.woodhousecommunity.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	26–27 January 2016

Information about this school

- The new headteacher was appointed to the permanent position in November 2019.
- Children in the room for two-year-olds attend the school part time, as do some children of Nursery age in the early years unit. Some Nursery children access 30 hours' provision. Children of Reception age attend the early years unit full time.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club, which was inspected as part of this inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- I met the governors and senior leaders of the school.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, geography and science. I met subject leaders, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I also met with pupils and their teachers to discuss pupils' learning.
- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' knowledge, records and actions. This included looking at the single central record. I met the parental support adviser and designated safeguarding lead. I also met the school's business

manager. I talked to pupils and staff about safeguarding.

- I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I also considered the 10 free-text responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and 50 responses completed on paper.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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