

Inspection of a good school: Woodlands Primary School

Woodlands Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2DU

Inspection dates:

10–11 December 2019

Outcome

Woodlands Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Woodlands Primary School feel safe, valued and well cared for. They told me that, 'This school is like a big family, where everyone gets on well with each other.' This is because all leaders put pupils at the heart of every decision that they make.

The school expects everyone to behave well and work hard. Pupils are challenged to do their best. They live up to this expectation. Pupils also appreciate that teachers help them to find answers for themselves, even when they are stuck or get something wrong. Pupils love to take advantage of the many opportunities that the school provides. For example, they use the fully equipped theatre to put on performances.

Behaviour in school is exemplary. Pupils are polite and well mannered. Older pupils are positive role models. They remind younger pupils to make the right choices, so that adults do not need to intervene very often. Pupils told us that bullying was rare. This is because it is not tolerated by leaders.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. As one parent said, 'The children's needs and happiness are at the forefront of engaging them in meaningful learning.'

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

Leaders and governors work hard to provide pupils with the best education possible. They have thought about what should be taught in the various subjects and considered how learning should be sequenced so that lessons build on pupils' prior knowledge. Leaders have developed an engaging and ambitious curriculum with particular strengths in English, mathematics, science, music, the arts and sport. History and geography are not as well developed. Leaders are aware of this and have appointed new leaders to ensure that the necessary improvements are made.

Reading is a priority throughout the school. The teaching of phonics is well organised and effective. All teachers are skilled and confident in the teaching of phonics. They provide

tailored support for the small number of pupils who are at risk of falling behind, to get them back on track. Pupils enjoy reading. They are given books at the right level for their ability and read regularly to an adult in school.

Guided reading sessions are well organised. Teachers use texts that are well matched to the interests and abilities of pupils. This makes sure that pupils are engaged in their learning. Pupils learn to read with fluency and expression. Pupils told me that they really enjoy being read to by an adult. They say that this adds to their love of reading.

Behaviour during lessons is exceptional. Pupils are eager to learn, and they are engaged in lessons. However, not all pupils attend school as often as they should. Leaders work hard to reduce absence, but it remains higher than it should be.

Leaders have the same high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs. Their thorough approach to assessment means that the needs of pupils are accurately identified. This makes sure that the right support is put in place. Most pupils with special educational needs learn alongside their classmates, enjoy the full curriculum and achieve well.

Children in the early years get off to a great start. The teachers plan a range of engaging activities which help children to grow and flourish. The development of reading, writing and early mathematics is cleverly woven into the many activities on offer. This secures strong foundations for future learning.

The curriculum is not limited to the school day. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities, both during and after the school day. They told me about the huge range of clubs that they can join. These include drama, music, art and a variety of sports clubs. All pupils can learn to play a musical instrument. Learning is also brought alive through scientific workshops, cultural diversity days and educational visits.

All staff in the school feel well supported and are proud to work at Woodlands Primary School. Staff all agree that their workload is taken into consideration. They say that leaders have taken steps to reduce this where they can. For example, leaders have rescheduled monitoring activities so that they don't all take place at the same time. Leaders are also mindful of staff well-being. Staff spoken to appreciate the creation of a well-being lead, who provides a welcome 'listening ear'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are up to date with the knowledge that they need to keep pupils safe. All staff know their pupils well. They are alert to the signs that show when something is not right. The safeguarding team is a strength of the school. Their weekly meetings ensure that any developing concerns are recognised early and appropriate action taken. Leaders work closely with the local authority. This ensures that pupils and families get the help that they need.

Leaders and governors ensure that appropriate checks are carried out for all staff and volunteers. They are meticulous in this work.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school offers a good quality of education. This is particularly the case in reading, writing, maths, science, music, sport and the arts. However, the history and geography curriculums are not as well sequenced. Leaders have started to address this. They should continue this work and complete the improvements that are planned. Leaders should also provide effective training for staff so that they are confident in the delivery of these subjects.
- Some pupils don't attend school as often as they should. Leaders should continue their hard work to reduce absence so that all pupils can take advantage of the good quality education that the school provides.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Woodlands Primary School, to be good on 18–19 October 2011.

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	139493
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10111280
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	718
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair/Chair of trust/Chair of governing body	Mark Childs
Headteacher	Nic Fiddaman
Website	www.theacademyofwoodlands.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2016

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average primary school. It is currently expanding to a three-form entry school. It has three classes in all year groups, apart from years 5 and 6.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds in its Nursery.

Information about this inspection

- We did deep dives in reading, science, PE and history. We discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils from lessons visited about the curriculum.
- I held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers.
- I met with the safeguarding team and reviewed the school's single central record. I looked at a range of documentation, including a sample of case files, and spoke to pupils and staff.
- I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.

- I considered the views of 52 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 52 additional free-text responses.

Inspection team

Stephanie Scutter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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