

Inspection of a good school: Woodlands Primary School

Woodlands Road, Formby, Liverpool, Merseyside L37 2JN

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 March 2022

Outcome

Woodlands Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have achieved their aim of creating a happy, caring, secure and stimulating community. Pupils really enjoy school. They feel safe and make the most of the high-quality learning experiences that leaders and staff provide for them.

Pupils are proud to live up to teachers' high expectations of their work and behaviour. They move calmly and quietly around the school and follow instructions immediately. Staff know pupils well and they quickly deal with any unkindness. Pupils trust that adults deal effectively with bullying. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), participate enthusiastically in learning and achieve well.

Pupils are keen to earn rewards for their 'house'. Staff and pupils make sure that those new to the school settle in quickly and make friends. Children in the early years learn to be polite to each other and to adults and to take turns. This ethos of mutual respect and care permeates all aspects of the life of the school. Pupils relish the many leadership opportunities that staff give them, such as being register monitors in the early years and play and sports leaders or reading buddies in Year 6.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and interesting curriculum which fully matches the requirements of the national curriculum. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education as they move between each phase of the school and transfer to secondary education.

Teachers make sure that pupils, including children in the early years, learn the most important aspects of all subjects in a logical order. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They use this knowledge well to deliver the curriculum in the ways that leaders expect. For instance, they use the school's outdoor area imaginatively to facilitate learning based on the exploration and discovery of nature.

Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 use the wooded area to re-enact stories such as 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' using props made from nature.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. They successfully use this information to provide timely help and support when necessary. Teachers ensure that most pupils achieve their best. Many pupils are able to recall knowledge with ease and they connect what they already know to what they are learning next. However, in a minority of subjects, some pupils find it more difficult to recall or build on knowledge which they gained previously due to the way that the curriculum is designed. At times, this slows learning, particularly at the start of a new topic.

Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at using a wide range of strategies and resources to make sure that pupils with SEND successfully follow the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates in all subjects. Teachers and leaders are adept at identifying any additional needs that pupils with SEND may have.

When pupils find work challenging, teachers encourage them to be positive, resilient and independent. Pupils use language such as 'This may take some time, but I will learn to do it', rather than 'I can't do this'. Teachers have developed well-established routines. They make sure that lessons are calm and purposeful so that learning is not interrupted by the need for reprimand.

Leaders recently introduced a new reading curriculum that pupils follow in a logical order. Teachers use a variety of exciting resources which contribute to pupils' enthusiasm for learning to read. Staff make sure that the books that pupils read match their reading ability so that they can regularly practise using their phonics knowledge. Although staff are well trained in teaching reading, some do not consistently pronounce letter sounds clearly and accurately. As a result, a minority of pupils become confused and they occasionally read and spell some words incorrectly. Even so, pupils who struggle to meet the expectations of the reading curriculum, including those with SEND, are well supported so that they catch up with their peers. Alongside their classmates, they become confident and fluent readers. Teachers are successful in encouraging pupils to read a wide range of texts for pleasure. Pupils talked very enthusiastically about their reading in school and at home.

Teachers ensure that pupils celebrate cultures and lifestyles which are different from their own. The school gives pupils many opportunities to develop a sense of social responsibility, for example by taking part in the eco club and charity work in the local community. By the time that they leave this school, pupils have undertaken many leadership roles, such as being part of the 'tech crew' that organises technical equipment for assemblies and school events. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities. The reading club is one example of an extra-curricular activity which pupils initiated and organised themselves.

The school's leaders, including governors, carefully consider the workload and well-being of staff when making decisions. Staff feel that their hard work and commitment are greatly appreciated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and leaders undertake regular safeguarding training and they know how to spot signs of possible abuse or neglect. They follow leaders' clear processes and procedures to report any concerns. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about themselves or others. Leaders quickly help pupils who are in difficulty and seek the support of specialist services when necessary. Staff and expert visitors teach pupils how to keep themselves safe from physical and emotional harm. Teachers make sure that pupils understand how to remain safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some staff do not pronounce letter sounds accurately and distinctly when teaching early reading. As a result, some children and pupils make mistakes when reading and spelling words. Leaders should ensure that those who teach early reading consistently say letter sounds in the correct way to help pupils to spell words correctly.
- In a minority of foundation subjects, the design of the curriculum does not give pupils enough opportunity to transfer key knowledge to their long-term memory. Consequently, in some subjects a minority of pupils struggle to recall previous learning and apply it in new contexts. Leaders should make sure that in all subjects, teachers plan activities which embed knowledge so that it can be applied to new learning over time.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	104881
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10199580
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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Mangan
Headteacher	Keith Williams
Website	www.woodlandsschoolformby.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 January 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection of this school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector spoke with pupils about their work and school life. She spoke with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information about attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. She reviewed leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View as well as responses to Ofsted's online surveys for school staff and pupils.
- The inspector conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and geography. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils and teachers about learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also listened to pupils read to a teacher or teaching assistant.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the curriculum and learning in other subjects. She looked at a sample of work from other subjects.

Inspection team

Liz Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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