

Inspection of a good school: Woodlands Community Primary School

Heathgate, Birch Green, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6QH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Woodlands Community Primary is a happy place to be. Pupils and their parents and carers value the 'family feeling' at the school. Staff build positive relationships with pupils and know them well. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or difficulties (SEND), know that the staff care about them and will support them if they have any worries. Leaders resolve any bullying issues thoroughly. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure.

Pupils understand leaders' high expectations of their behaviour and they make every effort to reach them. Pupils get on well together. They treat the staff and each other with respect. Pupils who have recently joined the school said that they were warmly welcomed and made friends easily.

Many pupils take advantage of the wide and varied range of exciting extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils value opportunities to take part in sporting events and competitions, including athletics and swimming. They take great pride in their sporting success. They enjoy the regular trips and residential visits they go on to enrich their learning.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are encouraged to try their best. However, some pupils, but particularly those who struggle to learn, are not taught to read well. This prevents them from achieving as well as they should.

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

Leaders have designed a broad, ambitious and interesting curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. They have carefully considered the local area and the experiences of pupils to make the content of the curriculum relevant.

From the early years, leaders have decided on the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn. They have ordered the content of curriculums thoughtfully to ensure that the new ideas that are introduced build on what pupils have previously learned. This allows pupils to make connections in their learning and to deepen their understanding over time.

Most subject leaders are trained well and provide valuable guidance for teachers about how to deliver curriculums effectively. However, teachers sometimes do not use assessment strategies consistently well in lessons to check that pupils' understanding is secure. This hinders them from adjusting their teaching approaches, such as directing the support provided by other adults, to meet pupils' learning needs effectively. As a result, some pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are identified early. Teachers deploy a range of approaches to ensure that this group of pupils experiences the same curriculum as their classmates. However, the progress made by this group of pupils is hindered by the weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum, including the early reading curriculum.

In the early years, staff help children in the Nursery class to listen carefully. This ensures that most children are ready to learn sounds and letters as soon as they start in the Reception class. However, leaders have not maintained a strong enough oversight of the success of the agreed phonics programme. The approaches taken by teachers to deliver the curriculum vary in quality.

Some pupils who find reading difficult, including those with SEND, do not receive effective support to help them to catch up quickly. Some of the books that pupils are given to practise their reading are too difficult. This can make reading laborious for pupils, affecting their enjoyment of reading as well as their confidence. Consequently, too many pupils are unable to read fluently and confidently by the end of key stage 1. In turn, this means that many pupils are unable to access the well-considered reading curriculum that leaders have designed for pupils in key stage 2.

Pupils are polite, well mannered and articulate. Pupils behave in a calm and sensible way during lessons, play times and around the school. Pupils are able to listen to their teachers and focus on their learning as lessons are rarely disrupted. Leaders' determined efforts to improve pupils' attendance have been rewarded.

Pupils embrace the rich diet of opportunities that leaders provide for learning beyond the classroom. Pupils experience regular and varied trips both locally and further afield. Pupils take part in themed weeks each year that celebrate significant people and cultural events. These experiences help pupils to broaden their horizons. Pupils understand and demonstrate that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of their differences. They develop a strong understanding of the importance of staying physically and mentally healthy.

Members of the newly reconstituted governing body are ambitious for the school. However, they lack sufficient awareness of some aspects of the school curriculum.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the approachability of leaders. Staff said that leaders give careful consideration to their workload and well-being.

Parents hold the school in high regard. Many parents value the support and care that their children receive. They also appreciate the efforts made by leaders to involve them in their children's education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They ensure that staff receive regular training so that they remain vigilant to the signs that indicate that pupils might be at risk from harm. Staff follow clear guidance to report concerns which are followed up tenaciously by leaders. When necessary, leaders do not shy away from escalating their concerns to secure appropriate help for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety, staying safe online and some of the features of healthy relationships, such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not kept a rigorous check on how well the early reading curriculum is delivered. This includes the effectiveness of the support provided to pupils who struggle with reading. This has resulted in many pupils not learning to read fluently or accurately soon enough which hinders their achievement. Leaders should ensure that staff are suitably trained to deliver the early reading curriculum effectively. In addition, leaders should ensure that pupils who struggle with reading receive effective support from suitably trained staff so they can catch up quickly.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information routinely to check pupils' understanding. They do not adapt their approaches effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. As a result, some pupils do not receive the support or adjustments they need to secure their understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained sufficiently well to adjust their teaching approaches in lessons in response to assessment information. This will enable pupils to access the curriculum with confidence and achieve well.
- Members of the governing body are not sufficiently informed about some aspects of the curriculum. This means that they are unable to challenge leaders effectively. Governors should ensure that they have the information that they need to hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum and pupils' achievement within it.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 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.

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	134599
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10211022
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	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Cooper
Acting Headteacher	Keeley Taberner
Website	www.woodlandschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for any pupil.
- There was an acting headteacher in post at the time of inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with subject leaders and other members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and corridors, at breakfast club and at lunchtime. She spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the

school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.

- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping children safe. She reviewed documentation, including information about attendance and bullying, and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND and scrutinised samples of documentation relating to SEND, including pupils' support plans.
- The inspector considered parents' views, which were shared through Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments received from parents. The inspector also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and for pupils.
- The inspector considered a range of documents shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, external reports and audits, the minutes taken at governing body meetings and leaders' self-evaluation documents.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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