

Inspection of Woodhouse Community Primary School

Walker Drive, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 6QW

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Woodhouse Community Primary School is a happy, welcoming school where pupils feel safe. Pupils speak positively about their kind and caring teachers.

Pupils at this school are confident, considerate and well mannered. However, behaviour is not consistently good. While most pupils behave well during lessons, this is not the case when they are moving around the school. Pupils and staff have welcomed the introduction of a new behaviour policy with praise at its heart. However, this is not used consistently to manage incidents of poor behaviour outside of lessons.

Since the last inspection, there has been significant instability in staffing and leadership. This has led to many changes in the curriculum over a short period of time. The current curriculum is in the early stages of development. Teachers are only now beginning to receive the training that they need to deliver the curriculum well. This means that some teachers are unclear about what to teach, and pupils are not learning well enough across wider curriculum subjects.

Parents appreciate that the school has been through a difficult period. They value the efforts staff have made to ensure that 'the children continue to learn and grow'.

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

Pupils do not benefit from a well-considered curriculum in some subjects. Many leaders are new to their areas of responsibility. As a result, they have not had the time to fully develop the curriculum they lead. New leaders have not been able to carry out checks on the implementation of the curriculum for their subject. The new consultant headteacher is beginning to give staff greater opportunities to lead their subjects. However, at the moment, the impact of the wider curriculum is variable. In some subjects, pupils do not remember what they have been taught. For example, in religious education, pupils have a limited understanding of some of the key aspects of the Christian faith, including why Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter.

Leaders have ensured that all staff in the early years and key stage 1 have been trained to teach early reading. As a result, pupils benefit from engaging, lively phonics lessons delivered by expert teachers. Books are increasingly well matched to pupils' needs. This is helping them to become fluent, confident readers.

Leaders make early reading a priority. Pupils in key stage 1 read with staff every day. In key stage 2, most pupils can talk about the books that they enjoy. They look forward to visiting the school library and having the chance to vote for the class book. Pupils appreciate the time that they are given to read independently. However, leaders rightly acknowledge that more needs to be done to further promote pupils' love of reading.

Leaders have adopted an ambitious curriculum for mathematics. They are currently working to ensure that the new curriculum is a good match for the needs of pupils in the school. Increasingly, teachers check to identify what pupils have learned so that lesson time can be adapted and used productively.

Children in the early years enjoy number sessions. They join in enthusiastically with counting songs and rhymes. This is helping them to develop their early mathematical understanding. However, children in the early years are given too few opportunities to practise what they have been taught to help them to remember it.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same opportunities to learn the curriculum as their peers. Teachers adapt lessons to make sure that pupils with SEND can access them.

Many pupils have a history of poor attendance. In some cases, pupils' attendance has improved as a result of leaders' support and challenge. However, attendance remains low across the school. Leaders recognise this and are proactive in their response to pupil absence. Leaders are mindful that some parents do not understand the benefits of good attendance for their children.

Pupils are taught to be respectful and tolerant of each other. They understand that everyone is different and that this is something to be celebrated. However, pupils do not have secure knowledge of protected characteristics and citizenship as these aspects of the curriculum are not sufficiently embedded.

Leaders have begun to broaden the number of trips that pupils take part in. They provide some clubs and after-school activities. However, these are mostly focused on a small number of sports. Pupils say that they would like to access a wider variety of extra-curricular opportunities than they do at present.

Governors are committed to the school and have worked tirelessly to try and secure the help that the school has needed. With help from the local authority, they have secured school improvement support and a consultant headteacher from a local multi-academy trust. The local authority has also recruited new governors with appropriate knowledge and experience to strengthen strategic oversight, support and challenge.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They have welcomed the new direction set by the consultant headteacher and the support received from leaders of the trust. They acknowledge that some work has been done to reduce workload but look forward to a period of stability and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk

of harm. Staff are clear about what actions they should take if they have concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being. Leaders ensure that the necessary checks are carried out on adults who work or volunteer in school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including in an online environment. Pupils are clear about what to do if they are worried about something. They know that an adult in school will always help them if they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Many subject leaders are new to their role and have not been able to develop the subject curriculum well enough to enable pupils to benefit from a coherent curriculum. Senior leaders need to ensure that subject and early years leaders have the support and capacity to develop a curriculum that teachers understand and are confident to deliver.
- Significant instability at senior level has led to an extended period of turbulence for the school. During this period of change, the school has struggled to make necessary improvements. Governors and interim leaders should look to bring long-term stability to the school through a sustained, well-managed improvement process.
- Sections of the school's behaviour policy and processes are not clear enough in communicating leaders' high expectations. This can occasionally lead to some variation in how staff apply the policy in practice. This means that some pupils do not behave consistently well. Leaders should further strengthen the behaviour policy so that these behaviour expectations are firmly understood by all.
- Some pupils are absent from school too often. This means they miss out on key learning and find it difficult to keep up with their peers. Leaders should ensure that the strategies they use to improve attendance help all parents to understand the importance of school attendance and its impact on pupils' success at school.
- The curriculum for personal development does not provide pupils with sufficient knowledge of fundamental British values, different faiths and protected characteristics. Leaders should review the current curriculum to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to learn about other faiths, equality and citizenship.

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	131919
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10241009
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Philip Hodgson
Headteacher	Rachael Smith
Website	www.woodhousecommunity.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone considerable staff and leadership changes.
- The school is currently receiving school improvement support from the Lingfield Trust, which has also provided the school with a consultant headteacher.
- There is an on-site nursery, which includes places for two-year-olds.
- There is a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The substantive headteacher was not present during the inspection.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, religious education and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at planning and samples of pupils' work in science and history.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils.
- An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, checked the single central record of adults working in the school and looked at safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, around the school and during social times. They held discussions with leaders about behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors met with the consultant headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, the office manager, a school improvement representative from the Lingfield Trust and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by considering responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents during the inspection. They also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Jane Wilson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Melanie Kane

Ofsted Inspector

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