

Inspection of Woodlands Community Primary School

Heathgate, Birch Green, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6QH

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of Woodlands Community Primary School. They are happy in school and enjoy being part of the school's caring and tight-knit community. Pupils are kind, well behaved and considerate.

The school has increased its expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because, until recently, pupils have not experienced a well-designed curriculum. Consequently, some pupils do not have a secure enough knowledge of the different subjects that they study.

Children in the early years, including those in the Nursery Year, achieve well in all areas of learning. Typically, they enjoy learning and exploring the world around them.

Pupils are active citizens. For example, they visit elderly residents in a local care home and sing in the community during festive seasons. Pupils also raise funds for a range of worthy causes, including children's charities.

Pupils know the fundamental British values, including those of democracy and the rule of law. Pupils are taught to be respectful of everyone, regardless of their beliefs or background.

Pupils benefit from rich and varied school experiences. This includes educational visits to many different places of interest, including natural history and science museums, art galleries and a wildfowl centre.

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

In recent times, the school has taken effective action to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Together with governors, the school has revised the curriculum and provided teachers with the support that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively in most subjects. The new curriculum is ambitious and logically ordered. It identifies clearly what pupils should learn. The achievement of pupils currently at the school is improving quickly. However, the impact of the improved curriculum on pupils' learning remains variable. This is because some pupils are living with gaps in their knowledge due to a weaker curriculum offer in the past. These pupils are not prepared well enough to meet the higher demands of the refreshed curriculum content.

These deficits in learning, along with a considerable proportion of pupils joining the school partway through their primary education, meant that, despite making progress through the curriculum, many pupils in Year 6 did not reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2023 national tests and assessments.

The school has improved its systems to check how well pupils are learning new knowledge. Teachers are becoming more adept at picking up and addressing pupils' misconceptions. However, some teachers do not use assessment strategies consistently well to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge that have arisen through weaknesses in the previous curriculum. In a few subjects, pupils do not have enough opportunity to reinforce and consolidate their learning so that it is committed to their long-term memory. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

In contrast, changes within the early years have made a greater difference to children's learning. Children benefit from a well-structured curriculum that is delivered effectively by well-trained staff. These improvements mean that children are much better prepared for their learning in Year 1 than was the case previously.

Reading is central to the curriculum. Pupils have access to a wide range of literature written by different novelists and poets. The school has recently improved and strengthened its early reading and phonics curriculums, which are delivered skilfully by well-trained staff. Children in the Nursery classes enjoy learning new rhymes and sounds. Children in the Reception class, and pupils in key stage 1, respond positively to phonics lessons. They practise reading with books appropriate to their phonics knowledge. Those who need extra support are identified quickly. The help that pupils receive enables them to keep up with their peers and to develop their fluency in reading.

The school has also turned its attention to pupils' writing knowledge. A consistent approach to teaching basic skills means that pupils are better prepared for their next steps in learning. However, some pupils have not had enough opportunity to make up for gaps in their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This limits them from expressing their ideas clearly and accurately when they write.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Staff enlist the services of external specialists to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. When necessary, staff modify their delivery of the curriculum to enable pupils with SEND to successfully access different areas of the curriculum. Even so, some pupils with SEND, like their peers, continue to live with gaps in their knowledge. This hinders their achievement.

Pupils' attendance is improving. The school's effective strategies have helped to ensure that fewer pupils are frequently absent from school. Typically, pupils enjoy learning and behave well in class.

The school works successfully to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils pursue their interests in the school's many clubs, including boxing, chess, art, dance and yoga clubs. They excel in inter-school sports competitions. Pupils respond positively to their many leadership roles, including play leaders, reading ambassadors and school council members. They have a well-developed understanding of cultural and religious diversity. Pupils eat healthily and exercise

regularly. They benefit from different therapies, which helps to maintain their mental health. Pupils learn about safe and appropriate personal relationships.

Governors have supported the school well to bring about considerable change and improvement over recent times. They offer appropriate challenge to the school to aid its continued development. The school has remained mindful of staff's workload while introducing new ways of working. Staff feel well supported. This makes the school a happy place in which to work and learn. Parents and carers expressed their positive opinions about their children's experiences at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils continue to live with gaps in their knowledge due to the weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Some teachers are not well equipped to spot and address lost learning. This limits pupils' achievement across different subjects. The school should ensure that gaps in pupils' learning are remedied so that they can benefit from the more ambitious subject content that is on offer through the new curriculums.
- In a few subjects, teachers do not revisit and reinforce pupils' previous learning to make sure that it has been committed to their long-term memory. This hinders the progress that some pupils make through the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers are supported so that they routinely enable pupils to deepen their learning over time.
- Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This restricts their ability to express themselves accurately and produce high-quality writing. The school should ensure that teachers identify and then address gaps in pupils' basic writing skills so that they can write accurately.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	134599
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10321409
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
Headteacher	Keeley Taberner
Website	www.woodlandschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteachers. They also held meetings with other staff, including those responsible for attendance and pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.

- The inspectors held meetings with the leaders responsible for SEND and the provision for children in the early years.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, art and design and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector met with parents and carers and reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He took account of responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Briggs	Ofsted Inspector
Cleo Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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