

Woodhouses Voluntary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105688
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	287297
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Pickering
Headteacher	Mrs Michelle Vickers
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Ashton Road Woodhouses Failsworth Manchester M35 9WL
Telephone number	0161 6816793
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a residential area in a semi-rural setting. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Heartstart, Tooth Friendly and Basic Skills Agency awards as well as the prestigious ActiveMark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has improved considerably since the last inspection, particularly over the last two years. It meets the challenges facing a small school with limited resources and personnel most successfully. The school provides good value for money and given the progress it has made has good capacity for future improvement. Its strong Christian values permeate the work of the school. Pupils develop good relationships with each other and the staff based on affection and respect. This is at the heart of the successful learning that is increasingly evident within the school.

Standards are high and pupils' progress is rapidly improving. This helps to ensure that pupils have the skills they will need in later life. They enjoy school very much and most are enthusiastic in their lessons. Attendance is consistently above average, and pupils participate fully in the many interesting activities available to them in and out of school. Parents say: 'My child goes to school each day skipping and eager to attend.' Parents and carers are solidly behind the school's work. They have many opportunities to visit and take part in the school's work and are kept well informed of their children's progress.

Pupils say they feel safe and cared for, and they show consideration for each other. The school is a happy place and visitors are greeted with beaming smiles. Pupils are expected to take responsibility from an early age. Their contribution to the school and wider community is outstanding. Every pupil is expected to have a role as a monitor or helper. The school council has improved the school's resources and its health awareness. It reports to the governing body and has attended its meetings. The school has good programmes of physical exercise and keeps pupils aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is one of the many improving aspects of the school. The school has made a determined effort to raise standards in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Staff are better trained and have benefited from improved resources. Learning is much more effective as a result. It is consistently excellent in the Foundation Stage. Here children flourish as a result of the expert and highly motivating teaching they receive. Whilst standards are improving, teachers do not always set pupils work that is appropriate to their needs. The targets pupils work towards are not always sufficiently challenging to help them do as well as they could. The school tracks pupils' progress and teachers mark their work conscientiously. However, marking does not always provide pupils with the advice they need to take the next steps in their learning. These factors are hindering pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher makes a significant contribution to raising standards and achievement, and has great vision and the practical skills needed to realise her ambitions. She has gained the support of staff and parents. The school has met the challenges it has faced as a result of long-term staff absence and staff changes very well. Raising standards and achievement has been the first priority. This is now starting to happen. At the same time, the school's overall aim of producing happy, well rounded young people has not been neglected. The school provides rich and exciting experiences for all pupils. Its strategic planning for the future is well developed and much improved since the last inspection. The school is fortunate to have an exceptional governing body. It is extremely supportive and gives of its expertise and energy unstintingly. The governors' Values and Beliefs Committee ensures that the school's core Christian values are emphasised in its work. The governing body is also

very aware of the need to evaluate the school's effectiveness in order to bring about improvement. The school's self-evaluation of its work is accurate. It knows what it must do to reach its aims, but it underestimates the impact of its recent improvement when judging its overall effectiveness.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are set challenging targets and tasks to enable them to achieve as well as they can and to raise standards.
- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of how they are performing and what they can do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in the rest of the school. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are above those expected nationally for their age. As a result of the excellent teaching and curriculum they receive they make good progress. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards above national averages, most notably in writing. Pupils are currently on target to reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, with standards in science expected to be in line with the national average. The rate of progress in the school after the Foundation Stage is only satisfactory. This is because the quality of teaching has not been consistent in the past. Thanks to the school's recent actions this is improving, as are rates of progress. In ICT pupils reach very good standards and achieve well. The few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive skilled support and achieve well as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good, with some outstanding features. The school's Christian values are woven throughout the school's work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent. The school's close links with the church underpin its spiritual and moral teaching. Pupils have very good awareness of their own and other cultures. The majority of pupils become kind and courteous young people thanks to the way the school oversees their social and emotional development. The school believes strongly in service to the community and all pupils are expected to contribute in a practical way. This is an outstanding area of their personal development. Pupils choose from many roles in school, have opportunities to help local and national charities and visit local community groups. Pupils are proud of their school, they say how much they enjoy lessons and the many visits and out-of-school activities. They particularly like the visits to Castleshaw and local museums. The older pupils really appreciate the residential visit to Robin Wood. Pupils feel safe and say the very rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and fairly. They are keen to take part in the varied programmes of sport and exercise and are very aware of health issues. The school provides first-class lunches and is working towards Healthy School status. Pupils attain good standards in basic skills and have opportunities to learn about money and commerce. This contributes towards developing the skills and attributes they will need to succeed in later life, although they do not all make the progress of which they are capable.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and improving, with some outstanding teaching observed. Teaching staff have improved their effectiveness following intensive training programmes and pupils are learning more successfully as a result. For example, recent strategies to improve the consistency of teaching and learning across the school in writing, ICT and mathematics are having a positive impact. Teaching and learning are outstanding in the Foundation Stage and children enjoy the well planned and varied activities which ensure their rapid progress. Elsewhere in the school staff respond well to the demands of teaching mixed age classes. They have become skilled in using exciting resources such as interactive whiteboards to focus and motivate pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work independently from an early age and most develop good thinking and study skills. Beyond the Foundation Stage, work provided for pupils is not always matched well enough to their ages and abilities. Also, although the school has raised its expectations of pupils' performance, the targets it sets are not yet sufficiently challenging. For these reasons, individual pupils are not always achieving as well as they could.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It is a significant factor in the pupils' good personal development and in their improving levels of achievement. The school ensures that basic skills are given appropriate emphasis. This has been endorsed by the Basic Skills Agency award. The school continues to explore ways of using the staffs' expertise in particular subjects to benefit as many pupils as possible. The highly skilled ICT coordinator currently teaches all the school's pupils up to Year 2 in this subject. They make excellent progress as a result. The quality and range of the enrichment activities provided is exceptional and reflects its aim to develop the whole child. In lessons, interesting links are made between subjects. The curriculum provides specialist lessons in sport, music, drama and French. This considerably enhances pupils' physical and cultural development. The school has been awarded the Activemark in recognition of its work in sport and physical exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are extremely well cared for and this aspect would be outstanding but for less effective aspects of their academic guidance. The school is warm and welcoming, and has a loving family atmosphere built on the school's Christian values. Staff and pupils know each other very well and pupils feel secure in asking for any help they may need. Parents and carers are appreciative of the individual attention their children receive. Many take advantage of the extended care available before and after school. The school's arrangements for child protection and health and safety are robust and in line with current government requirements. Pupils' work is regularly marked and their progress is assessed frequently.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides rigour and clear-sightedness to the school's leadership and has developed and utilised the considerable talents of the staff. They welcome opportunities to improve those skills that have contributed to the improvements in standards and achievement. Morale is good and there is a growing sense of confidence and teamwork. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning and on pupils' progress are carried out effectively by the leadership team, with subject coordinators becoming increasingly involved in this role. Nevertheless, the school's managers do not yet ensure that appropriate targets are set for all pupils to make the best possible progress. The school is resourceful in raising funds and makes good use of its budget. It has considerably improved the fabric of the school building and ICT equipment. The governing body is outstanding and is held up as a model for other schools by the local authority. It is fully involved in the work of the school and monitors its performance closely. Its committee structure is impressive and governors use their expertise to support the school and to carry out their critical friend role effectively. They have made particularly notable contributions to the development of the school's curriculum and to pupils' personal development.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A**Leadership and management**

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to you to let you know what I thought about your school after my recent visit. Thank you for making me very welcome and for telling me about your school. Your school is a good place to learn. I have made a list of some of the reasons below.

- You told me how much you enjoy school. It was clear to me how much you love taking part in the many activities provided for you in and out of the classroom.
- Your attendance is good and most of you behave well in lessons and in the playground, and are polite and helpful.
- The ways that you take responsibility and help the school as monitors and in the school council is outstanding.
- The headteacher and other staff look after you very well and are always trying to make things better for you.

To help you to become better learners I have asked your school to make sure that the work you are set in lessons always matches your age and abilities. Also, I would like your teachers to provide you with more helpful comments when they mark your work so you can improve even more. Finally, your teachers need to make sure that the targets they set for you are challenging enough for you to do as well as you can.

You can help by thinking about your targets and working hard to reach them. I know you can do it.