



# Wood Bank School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 107590  
**Local Authority** Calderdale  
**Inspection number** 287861  
**Inspection date** 31 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Michael McDowell

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Dene View
<b>School category</b>	Community special		Luddendenfoot, Halifax
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2-11		West Yorkshire HX2 6PB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01422 884170
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	49	<b>Fax number</b>	01422 884671
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jayne Crane
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Ingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2001		

---

<b>Age group</b> 2-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 31 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 287861
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Wood Bank is a special school for children aged between 2 and 11 who have severe, or profound, multiple and complex learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder. The pupils are drawn from throughout Calderdale. The proportion of pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties is now much greater than it was when the school was last inspected in June 2001. In the same period the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased fourfold and for almost four out of every ten, English is not the language principally spoken at home.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The overall effectiveness of Wood Bank special school is outstanding. The attainments of its learners are, because of their special educational needs, extremely low in comparison with those found in mainstream schools. However, their achievement is exceptional. Children enter the Foundation Stage with little awareness of the world around them and few, if any, communication skills. They swiftly respond to very skilled teaching, begin to join in and make their needs and feelings known. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 make exceptional progress in all areas. However, those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, while still achieving well, make slower progress in science than others.

The excellent progress made by pupils is largely due to the very high quality of teaching and the outstanding suitability of the curriculum. The assessment of learners' capabilities is very thoughtful and accurate. The school has played a key role in producing an excellent Foundation Stage extended profile for the local authority which is used by the school to enable it to fully capture and describe the tiny first steps of progress made by pupils. Teachers use the information provided by this and other measures to devise individual programmes for their pupils and to plan their learning paths very thoroughly. The school recognises that if pupils are to develop academically or personally they must be able to communicate reliably with others. Great emphasis is placed on augmenting oral communication with sign, and on providing alternative systems based on pictures or objects. This approach has first-rate outcomes and facilitates social learning.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils behave well and they are helped very effectively to develop concern for the needs of others. They begin to think about choice. In as much as they are able, they develop independence and self-help skills. The care and support given by the school leads pupils to enjoy their time in school and to feel safe. The school does as much as possible through its well thought out policies and procedures to keep them healthy and secure. Commitment to the ideal of inclusion is very high. The school has earned the trust of parents, who hold it in high regard. Parents are given beautifully presented records of their children's achievements which present the story of their child's life in school in a folder and on disk. The school works very effectively with other agencies to provide the health care and therapy that pupils need. It acts very effectively to ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. The school is kept under review and its strengths and weaknesses are well known. In its self-evaluation it was too modest in judging teaching and learning, and leadership and management as good. It is exceedingly well managed and well governed. Resources are used very effectively. The capacity of the leadership to bring about further improvement is outstanding.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the standards achieved in science by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children enter the Foundation Stage with extremely low attainments because of the profound and complex nature of their learning difficulties. They are very thoroughly assessed and they are given individual learning plans. They respond very well to excellent provision, achieve or exceed the targets set for them in their plans and make significant progress towards their early learning goals. By Year 1, most have moved up two or more levels on the P scale, the benchmark used to measure the achievement of children who learn slowly. From Year 1 to Year 6 pupils continue to make exceptional progress. The performance of pupils whose home language is not English is similar to that of others. This is because most such children are pre-lingual when they start at the school and they pick up meaning through signs or pictures at a similar rate to others. In 2006, the performance of all pupils across the age range in both literacy and numeracy was as good as or better than that of similar pupils elsewhere. In science, pupils with severe learning difficulties or with autistic spectrum disorders also equalled or outperformed similar pupils elsewhere. However, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieved less well. The careful assessments made by the school show that pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress in all of their other areas of learning. They reach the goals set for them in their individual plans. They particularly enjoy and achieve highly in active lessons such as physical education.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Learners enter the school at the earliest stages of personal development. Their individual strengths and weaknesses are analysed very carefully and programmes are put in place to develop their awareness of their environment and their response to others. This is done very successfully. Pupils learn to recognise and tolerate others and, eventually, to communicate their own needs and wishes. Through their increasing cooperation, for example procedures for their personal care or in lessons, they show that they are very much more aware of the world around them and of the people with whom they share it. The excellent pace of personal development continues in later stages. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development takes place at a level appropriate to them and is very good. Most are very sociable and enjoy the company of their fellow learners. They learn to use signs, symbols and pictures very well. They begin to think of the welfare of others and through the internet have had a link with children in an AIDS clinic in South Africa. They have also contributed to the building of a school in Pakistan. In their own community pupils are extremely pleased to serve on the school council, in which they are taught, very effectively, to make choices. The happy expressions on many faces show that pupils enjoy learning very much. They feel safe and well cared for and clearly like the healthy meals and snacks that the school provides. Higher-achieving pupils put into simple words their understanding of the need to eat the right foods and take exercise. A number of pupils attend the school's Sports Zone club after school. Behaviour is good. Attendance is good and children are absent only when they are ill or undergoing medical treatment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teachers know their pupils very well. They understand how best to engage them in learning. They stimulate the response and participation of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties successfully through rich multi-sensory activities. Similarly, they meet the needs of those with autistic spectrum disorder by limiting stimulation to a level with which they can comfortably cope. All classroom staff consistently use the school's excellent communication strategy. Signing accompanies oral instructions and pupils who are able are expected to sign in return. Symbols, pictures and real objects are used to good effect to make meaning clear to pupils and to enable pupils to express their understanding. All of this contributes to pupils making exceptional progress. Teachers cope well with classes that are made up from pupils with widely differing capabilities and needs. The school shows its high commitment to inclusion by not grouping pupils according to level of need. Teachers show very good classroom management to make this demanding system work effectively. Teaching assistants who are deployed where they are most needed contribute very strongly to the success of teaching and learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Through its excellent curriculum the school puts into effect its aim to broaden its pupils' experience of the world as much as possible. Among its best features is the emphasis on a consistent communication strategy. The school makes very effective use of published schemes of work specially designed for those who are at levels below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements are met. Much emphasis is placed on promoting enjoyment in learning. Most pupils have opportunities for social inclusion either by attending sessions at a mainstream primary school or as part of a class that hosts mainstream pupils. The school arranges activities that enable pupils to socialize and learn within school hours.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school places great emphasis on providing the highest quality physical care for its pupils. The areas in which personal care and toileting procedures are carried out are kept spotlessly clean and great attention is paid to preserving the privacy and dignity of pupils. Pupils' particular health needs are overseen by the school nurse. Excellent feeding plans, developed in conjunction with the speech and language therapy service, are in place for the many children who need these. There is good provision for physiotherapy and for hydrotherapy. Procedures to safeguard pupils are thorough. Robust vetting procedures are in place for all adults who work with the pupils. There is a policy for child protection

and staff members are clear about the role that they should play. The school is rigorous in safeguarding its vulnerable pupils. In recent incidents it has shown this by taking the lead in marshalling resources from other agencies to meet the needs of children and families in crisis. The school monitors and records the academic and personal development of its pupils exceptionally well. For all pupils individual education plans are in place. These are strongly based on very accurate assessment of pupils' needs, and set out clearly how achievement is to be improved.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The leadership of the school has successfully raised standards and improved provision since the last inspection in 2001. The headteacher leads the school with great assurance and the deputy headteacher and senior staff members provide strong support. The school takes very effective steps to assess its performance and to keep all elements of its provision under review. Planning for development is very good and has proved to be effective over time. It has led to very significant improvements in key areas including teaching and learning, the curriculum, buildings and resources, and provision for continuing professional development. Continuing professional development is seen by the headteacher as an important pathway to improved achievement. In all its decision making the leadership emphasises the importance of giving pupils the highest quality of education and care. Commitment to inclusion and to ensuring that every child matters is outstanding. As a result, pupils are very well looked after in a safe environment, make exceptional progress, and take great pleasure in coming to school. The school maintains very good relationships with outside agencies that support its work. It is very highly regarded by parents. The management of the school is highly effective and as a result the school runs smoothly. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They take a part in planning future developments and improvements and examine proposals critically. They carry out their statutory duties well. Resources are used very effectively and the leadership is outstandingly well placed to bring about further improvements.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for being so helpful when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed seeing you in your lessons at lunch-time and when you were playing. I would particularly like to thank the school council for allowing me to come to your meeting.

Here are the things I found on my visit.

- Your school is very good and is a great help to you all.
- You work as well as you can and make excellent progress in most of what you do, but some of you could do better in science.
- As you get older you become much more aware of others and take much more notice of what is going on around you. You want to help others when you can.
- You have exceptionally good teachers who know you very well and give you interesting and enjoyable things to do.
- All of the grown-ups at the school do their best to keep you healthy and safe.
- Your school is led and managed exceptionally well so that you continue to get the help and education that you need.

In order to help make your school even better I have asked the headteacher to:

- help those of you who are doing less well in science to do better.

Thank you once again for your help,