

Woodfall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135019
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	294255
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Mellor
Headteacher	Mr F Toop
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodfall Lane Little Neston Neston Merseyside CH64 4BT
Telephone number	0151 3361120
Fax number	0151 3531402

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. Woodfall became a primary school in September 2005 as a result of the amalgamation between an infant and junior school. Most are from White British heritage and a very small proportion speak English as an additional language. A lower than usual proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the school does house a resource base for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional and complex needs. This means that it has a much higher than average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. Woodfall Primary has already gained the ActiveMark Gold award and is currently seeking to convert others to whole-school awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Woodfall Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education overall. There are strengths in pupils' good personal development, in the sensitive care and support they receive and in the richness of their curriculum. Senior leaders have managed the smooth amalgamation between the separate infant and junior schools very well. The highest priority for them has been to ensure that pupils and staff made the transition happily and safely. This has been very successfully accomplished. Now all managers need to focus more rigorously on raising pupils' achievements and strengthening the quality of teaching and learning.

Standards on entry to the Reception classes are above those found normally. Throughout the school, most pupils achieve satisfactorily, leaving Year 6 with above average standards. As a result of their effective support, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those in the resource base, make good progress. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, it needs to be consistently good to enable all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, to achieve well.

The school has several good features. It sets high expectations of pupils' conduct and commitment, which pupils meet. It provides a very positive ethos and secure environment in which pupils enjoy learning, feel safe and establish good relationships. The curriculum is rich and effectively promotes pupils' good achievements in the arts and in sport. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The fact that pupils in the resource base are fully included in mainstream classes and other activities such as assemblies and after-school clubs plays no small part in their good achievements and very effective personal and social development. Rigorous systems to check on pupils' progress are quite new and too little time has elapsed since their introduction for them to demonstrate improved achievement. However, appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified, which indicates that leaders and managers have a satisfactory understanding of the areas in which pupils need to improve. The school is rather optimistic in its view of itself, especially in its judgements of pupils' achievements and of the quality of teaching and leadership and management. It offers sound value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that teaching is of a consistently good quality so that all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils make better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Reception classes with higher skills than is usual. They make satisfactory progress and most enter Year 1 reaching or exceeding the targets set for them in all areas of their learning. There are particular strengths in their reading and in their physical, personal, social and emotional development. From Years 1 to 6 most pupils continue to achieve satisfactorily and leave Year 6 attaining above average standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science). Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially pupils

with statements of special educational need, achieve well because they are well supported, their work is planned scrupulously and their progress is carefully tracked. Throughout the school the more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The enriched curriculum and some effective specialist teaching results in pupils' good achievements in the arts, sport and in French. Those with special talents and or gifts achieve well. The school has recognised that boys' writing is an area for further development. It has introduced a number of initiatives, in partnership with the local authority and with other agencies, to help increase boys' enjoyment of writing and to improve their standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils show positive attitudes to school and are courteous, friendly and polite. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. For example, the links made with a school in South Africa (Afri-twin) help pupils to develop a better understanding and awareness of the multicultural nature of modern Britain. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and explain, 'Carbohydrates are found in pasta, rice and potatoes, and they provide you with energy so that you can run around.' Pupils report they feel safe in school and know who to turn to for help. They contribute well to the school and wider communities. They have an influential voice in decision-making through the school council and influence its provision by responding to questionnaires about the teaching and learning they experience. Pupils' acquisition of the basic skills is good and their attendance is average. Their understanding of the working of business and the economy are not as strong as other aspects of their personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there is a mixture of satisfactory, good and outstanding teaching, the overall quality is not consistently strong enough to ensure that all pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress. Main strengths in teaching are in the good relationships established which ensure that pupils behave sensibly and view learning positively and in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils' interest. Teachers also clearly explain new learning and involve pupils in paired work to share ideas. Where teaching is less effective, lessons are not structured carefully enough to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, the more able pupils are often required to listen to repeated explanations about things they already know, rather than pressing on to apply their knowledge to more challenging tasks. In numeracy lessons, teachers promote pupils' use of precise mathematical vocabulary insufficiently and this contributes to their comparatively lower achievement in this subject in Years 3 to 6. The support and interventions provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and plays a significant part in helping them to achieve well. Some outstanding teaching in the resource base ensures that those pupils with statements of special educational need and those with complex needs thrive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, is enriched and meets statutory requirements. The school makes very good use of residential visits in Years 2, 4 and 6 to extend pupils' learning in the arts, science, humanities and physical education (PE). Typical comments include: 'I loved weaving with the withies'; 'it's great - you get to share a dormitory with all your mates!' Work displayed around the school is of a very high quality and reflects the exciting opportunities offered to pupils, particularly in the arts. The music and PE curriculum benefits from experts bought in by the school. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy weekly lessons in French. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils, including 'school for a day' and a creative writing initiative. The school recognises that there is a need to forge more links between subjects, particularly to promote pupils' ICT and literacy skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils. There are some outstanding features within the care provided, especially the way in which the most vulnerable pupils are supported. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to achieve well. Parents are very enthusiastic in their praise for the school and are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. Strong personal, health and social education programmes equip pupils to make the right choices outside school with regard to their personal well-being. Good procedures for induction and transfer ensure that pupils settle happily into new routines in the Foundation Stage, in Year 3 and when they move to secondary school. Pupils know the targets expected of them and are satisfactorily shown how best to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders, in particular the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have succeeded in ensuring a very smooth transition from the two separate schools into one. There is now a need to focus more rigorously on raising pupils' achievements and on improving the overall quality of teaching and learning. Leaders and managers are most successful in promoting pupils' personal development and welfare and in providing them with an enjoyable curriculum. New structures in senior and middle management are still being established and although some green shoots are appearing, the often very new systems to manage performance are not yet fully effective in bringing about sustained improvement.

The school has established effective partnerships with parents, other schools and the local authority and makes good use of the expertise of specialist and external agencies. These partnerships have had a very positive impact on pupils' good personal development and their rich curriculum.

A strength in leadership is how inclusive the school is for pupils who are more vulnerable or who have complex needs. They feel valued and as a result commit to and enjoy the school. Governors are effective. They check rigorously on the school's standards, the quality of teaching and pupils' safety and security. They challenge the school effectively and have been instrumental in securing very good improvements to the accommodation.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Inspection of Woodfall Primary School, Little Neston, CH64 4BT

On behalf of Mrs Hunt, Mrs Ravey and myself, I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You told us lots of things that you enjoyed about school. You seemed to particularly enjoy art and design, music and the visits you make out of school, and you very much appreciate the people who visit your school to help you with your work. Because your teachers are friendly and helpful you respond by behaving well and are keen to work hard. The care and support given to you by all the adults mean that you feel safe and secure and we were very impressed by the way you all get on so well together. Your headteacher and the other people who run the school have worked very hard to make sure that the change from an infant school and a junior school into one big school has been easy for you all.

At the moment the school is satisfactory and there are one or two things we have asked the headteacher and governors to do to make it even better. We asked them to make sure that you make faster progress through the school and that all your lessons are good. They can do this by visiting your lessons more often and looking at your work in more detail.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and being so friendly. We hope you carry on enjoying school and work really hard.