

Woodberry Down Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100248
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307336
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	385
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	85
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Passam MBE
Headteacher	Mr Greg Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Woodberry Grove Finsbury Park London N4 1SY

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Inspection number	307336

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Age group 3–11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision of a Nursery and two Reception classes. Across the school, nine out of ten pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Many of these have speech and language difficulties. A large number of pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. A quarter of pupils are refugees. The school has the Healthy Schools and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) awards and is an Investor in People. It has won many other awards including the Leading Aspect award for innovation in curriculum development and assessment, and it is an Eco School. The school regularly contributes to national and international conferences and is often featured favourably in the media. It led the training and support element of the Department for Children Skills and Families (DCSF) Black Children's Achievement Project across ten schools in Hackney and Southwark. The school is federated with another school in Hackney and the executive principal for both schools divides his time equally between them. The Family Welfare Association has offices within the school and supports vulnerable children and their families.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodberry Down is an outstanding school that provides high quality education for all its pupils. The executive principal is an inspirational leader who has built an excellent team of assistant headteachers. Together they have very high expectations of pupils and staff and ensure the school's policies and procedures are applied consistently. Teaching and learning are outstanding, as pupils make very rapid progress from low starting points to reach the national average by the end of Year 6. Refugees and pupils who start school speaking little or no English do particularly well, and the level of pastoral care for all pupils is outstanding.

The school excels in many areas of its work, but is especially successful in the quality of the academic guidance it gives pupils and in its creative and culturally relevant curriculum. Staff show exceptional levels of innovation and flair in designing units of work that captivate the imagination of pupils and develop their skills across a range of subjects. For example, a project on the African American cycling champion, Marshall Taylor, enabled pupils to examine a variety of sources of information and use higher-order reading skills in their research. There is an extremely effective written dialogue in books, between teachers and pupils, that stems from an efficient system of marking using tailor-made labels. These show pupils how well they are doing, ask them questions to move their learning forward and set new targets for them. Pupils' responses show a heightened awareness of their learning. One pupil said, 'You get good advice and get your levels up.'

Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils attain the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6, which is an outstanding achievement considering their very low starting points. Even so, the school is ambitious for more pupils to attain the higher levels and has already enjoyed some success this year. For example, a new scheme of work for mathematics is very practical and has a high level of challenge built into it, which has led to a good improvement in the number of pupils exceeding national expectations for their age. Pupils' excellent achievement is a result of outstanding teaching, with lessons conducted at a brisk pace that involves pupils actively in their learning. Much emphasis is placed on speaking and listening. This enables pupils learning English as an additional language to make rapid progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as they have extremely positive attitudes to school and the curriculum is designed especially well to engage and interest them. Pupils take plenty of exercise through physical education lessons and by keeping active at playtimes. They have an extremely good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. They know all about the dangers of illegal drugs and alcohol abuse. Behaviour is good and is managed very well by staff. Pupils are caring towards one another and undertake a wide variety of responsibilities around school, including as 'eco-warriors'. They make an extremely positive contribution to their local community and further afield, taking a great interest in the massive regeneration project that is affecting their homes. Pupils become confident learners, well prepared for secondary school.

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that the school has continued to make considerable progress since its last inspection. The federation with another school in Hackney has given new leadership responsibilities to a wide range of staff, and this has enabled a very strong team of assistant headteachers to be developed. Monitoring of the school's work is rigorous and systematic, and a sophisticated database enables information to be stored and

exchanged quickly and efficiently. The school benefits from the support of an outstanding governing body that brings a high level of expertise in discharging its duties. The school is a vibrant and successful learning community and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities that are exceptionally low, especially in language and communication and in their personal and social development. They make outstanding progress in the EYFS because the curriculum is stimulating and takes full account of their needs. Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and ensure that they receive a wide range of high quality experiences that promote their development exceptionally well. Very effective use is made of outdoor areas, and children have opportunities to look after the Nursery's chickens and collect their eggs. The school is planning to provide the Reception outdoor area with a canopy for all-weather use. Most children who benefit from two years of the EYFS reach the expected early learning goals by the end of Reception, but many others join later and have less time to catch up. There are excellent procedures for assessing children's progress and for informing parents about what their children have been learning each day. This means children have many opportunities to discuss their learning with adults. The EYFS is led and managed outstandingly well. A very strong team of teachers and nursery nurses ensures there is a high level of consistency between the work of the Nursery and the Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on new initiatives to ensure that more pupils attain the higher levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are broadly average overall, with most pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In the past, fewer pupils have attained the higher levels. However, recent initiatives in promoting reading and mathematics in particular have been successful in enabling more pupils to gain ground so that the numbers performing above what is expected for their age are increasing. The school is keen to build upon and consolidate these gains. Pupils make outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2, benefiting especially from a structured programme to develop their reading and writing. Despite this, in 2008 standards by the end of Year 2 were below average because of the high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties or joining the school late with very little English. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above expectations because pupils have many opportunities to use and apply their skills in exciting curriculum projects. Achievement is outstanding from pupils' very low starting points, with all groups of pupils, including those with language and communication difficulties, progressing very well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

A pupil commented, 'This playground is joyful because there are so many things to do.' Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and find the many different activities relevant and interesting. One pupil said, 'They think about everybody.' Attendance has risen rapidly in recent years and is

now good for the vast majority of pupils, reflecting their desire to come to school. The school council consults with the catering staff to ensure there are healthy options on the menu and pupils run their own fruit shop. Pupils say that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried about anything. Following an assembly on firework safety, many pupils were able to explain the correct firework code. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to reflect upon their learning and upon topical issues. They have an exceptionally good understanding of their own and others' cultures. As well as close links with their federated school in another part of the borough, pupils also have long-established relationships with pupils in a school in Ghana. They have recently taken part in a Global Partners project with pupils in New York schools, further developing their understanding of how pupils in other countries learn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

A high proportion of lessons are outstanding, as teachers have excellent subject knowledge, which they use to enthuse pupils. They make excellent use of talking in pairs and role play to engage pupils in learning, and employ technology extremely effectively to make lessons interesting. For example, Year 1 pupils used photographs to understand about the life of Rosa Parks and her fight for civil rights, linking this with the topical victory of Barack Obama in the American presidential election the night before. Classroom assistants provide very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, making good use of additional resources that help them to participate in lessons. Particularly good planning ensures activities are matched very well to pupils' prior attainment, with high expectations of their progress and behaviour in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The exceptionally strong curriculum ensures all pupils are included and makes excellent provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The school's own units of work provide outstanding links between subjects in innovative and creative ways. For example, pupils used maps to trace the journey of a refugee boy as part of an extended project linked to a novel by Benjamin Zephaniah. The school's website is an extremely effective tool, bursting with information and offering a virtual learning environment that enables pupils to communicate with their teachers from home. The curriculum provides outstanding enrichment that contributes greatly to pupils' excellent personal development and well-being and their enjoyment of school. Clubs include baseball and Hip Hop dancing and are very well supported. Year 6 pupils study the life of fossil-hunter Mary Anning and visit the Natural History Museum to look at fossils. They also spend a week on the Dorset coast finding fossils for themselves. This brings history alive and develops their social skills well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' needs are identified early and a very wide range of support is offered including art therapy, counselling, and speech and language development. Weekly meetings of the pupil support group ensure everybody knows how individuals are doing and what needs to be done

next. All safeguarding arrangements are met fully. The school's marking system is exceptionally effective in showing pupils how to improve based on very clear assessment of their progress. There is excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that enables them to achieve outstandingly well. Refugees settle into school quickly and make particularly strong progress because of the high levels of support they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leaders have been very successful in overcoming the barriers to learning pupils face by implementing exciting and dynamic strategies for improvement. They have an excellent understanding of the needs of their pupils and have put considerable time and energy into creating a curriculum that suits them. Very effective monitoring is backed up by coaching and support to ensure high levels of consistency in teaching and learning. Parents have positive views about the work of the school. One said, 'My son is always keen to go to school and he is learning a lot.' The impact of leadership and management is not only seen in pupils' outstanding academic progress, but also in their excellent personal development and highly developed cultural understanding. The school is very successful at uniting its community and in establishing close links with pupils at home and abroad. Strategic plans reflect the executive principal's clear vision for the school, and all staff contribute to their formulation, with extremely robust systems for measuring and monitoring the school's performance. Governors evaluate the work of the school extremely effectively and offer considerable support and challenge.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodberry Down Community Primary School, London, N4 1SY

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. Yours is an outstanding school and here are some of its particular strengths.

- You make outstanding progress in your work to develop the skills you need in literacy and numeracy.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to make healthy choices and keep safe.
- You are very involved in supporting the life of the school and in getting to know pupils in other schools in this country and overseas.
- Your lessons excite you and give you a love of learning.
- The curriculum interests you and has been especially designed with you in mind.
- You get extremely helpful feedback from your teachers about your work, and this means you know what to do next to improve.
- The school cares for you particularly well.
- The executive principal and the assistant headteachers lead and manage the school exceptionally well.

You all do very well in your work, but we agree with the school that some of you can do even better. The school is introducing new ways of teaching you mathematics and writing to help you excel, and already this is beginning to have an impact. We are encouraging your teachers to continue this work so that more of you attain the higher levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Thank you once again for your help. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector