

# Woodlawn School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108652
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	309756
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mel Blackband

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Claire McCann
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Bruce Hickman with Mrs Val Brown (Acting Head)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Langley Avenue West Monkseaton Whitley Bay Tyne and Wear NE25 9DF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2008729
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 2008616

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

## Description of the school

Woodlawn School provides for pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in speech and communication, sensory impairment and complex medical needs. Other pupils have moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and a growing number are on the autistic spectrum. There is an Early Years Assessment Unit at the school. The pupils are all of White British origin. The number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is about average for the type of school. The acting headteacher has been in post for two months.

## 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 with some outstanding features. All the pupils achieve well in their studies and some make excellent progress. Pupils love coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe and happy and that the school has high expectations of their success. One parent's comment was typical; 'I can't thank the school enough for what my child has gained'. Pupils' achievements are underpinned by the excellent progress they make in their personal development.

The pupils enjoy their lessons and respond by trying their best. The teaching is good because lessons are invariably interesting and well managed. The classroom staff know pupils' attainment very well and this enables them to work productively with pupils to enhance their learning. However, there are inconsistencies in the assessment and recording of the pupils' small steps in progress and this means that learning sometimes is less focused. The provision is enriched by the many excellent opportunities, which the pupils have to interact with the community, by good programmes in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in well-organised work related learning for older pupils. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) within the school, particularly in supporting the pupils with language difficulties by means of communication devices, is exemplary.

Pupils thrive within the caring and supportive ethos of the school. The spiritual, social and moral development of pupils is outstanding. They feel very secure and well supported. They learn to remain healthy, to keep safe and to behave extremely well. They value the school and this is evident through the very good relationships they have with staff and each other and the good attendance of most pupils. They are well prepared for moving on to the next stage in their lives, whether it is through further education or training. The effectiveness of educational support and guidance is sometimes restricted because targets to help pupils improve their work are not always clear and precise enough.

The senior team, after a period of uncertainty within the school's leadership, have driven the good provision. The acting head teacher and her deputy have steadied the school in a short time and have been effective in monitoring and improving standards. The governors offer appropriate support. The school evaluates its own work accurately. The school is now well set to build on the good progress made since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to further improve provision.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Provision is outstanding because all the children make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding, and in their personal development. Teachers and support staff know the children very well. They adapt activities skilfully to meet the needs of each child and, as a result, children enjoy their work and try their best. The classroom is a calm, happy place because the children feel safe and routines are well established. Staff maintain excellent relationships with children. They are warm and encouraging whilst managing children's behaviour very well. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. There are very good procedures for children's transition into the main school.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve assessment so that it captures each small step in the pupils' learning and gives teachers a clear overview of the pupils' achievement.
- Improve the sharpness and focus of learning targets so that they always show pupils clearly how to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

All the pupils achieve well and some make outstanding progress. Although many children enter the Foundation Stage with low levels of attainment, they make excellent progress and this gives them a flying start when they join the main school. By Year 11, all the pupils gain appropriate levels of accreditation and some higher ability pupils achieve GCSE success. Whilst standards are below what is expected for pupils of this age, these achievements represent good progress because of the pupils' learning difficulties. There is no evidence to suggest that any group of pupils performs differently from others or that progress varies between subjects. Pupils with additional needs, such as communication difficulties, achieve well because of the excellent support they are given to overcome the barriers to their learning. The tracking of pupils' progress in the acquisition of basic skills has recently improved significantly and this has had a positive impact on their continuing achievement.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The pupils' excellent progress in all aspects of their personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, reflects the school's strong emphasis on moral and social values. The pupils' cultural awareness is also outstanding. Pupils develop an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles through the many opportunities to take part in physical activity. They make excellent gains in their social skills and in their tolerance of and desire to help less mobile or articulate children because teachers provide excellent role models for them. Pupils contribute significantly to the well-being of everyone at the school through, for example, the opportunities provided by the school council. Encouraged by staff, they practise and generalise their personal skills throughout the day in all their activities. They develop skills relevant to their futures extremely well. Pupils feel safe and confident, and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. They were adamant that there was never any bullying or intimidation at school. Parents confirm that their children really enjoy their learning. As one parent wrote, 'The school is like a family; warm, welcoming and caring'. This is reflected in the pupils' good attendance and very positive attitudes to school, which have a substantial impact on their achievements. Those parents who returned questionnaires had high praise for the school and its impact on their children's lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers and their assistants have a good understanding of their pupils' overall ability and this enables them to work effectively with small groups or individuals. Pupils thus receive a high level of support and this has a positive impact on their achievement. Planning for lessons is

generally good, although teachers do not always efficiently record each small step in the pupils' progress and consequently their learning targets are sometimes less well focused. Pupils like their teachers and the support staff, and so respond very well in lessons. Teachers motivate pupils effectively through interesting and well-paced activities. They make excellent use of interactive whiteboards and plasma screens to enliven lessons and keep the pupils' attention. Pupils with communication difficulties are able to take a full part in classroom activities because staff are skilled in providing suitable electronic equipment to enable the pupils to answer questions or express their wishes. As a result, these pupils become much more confident in taking part. The management of behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils understand and respond well to the clear routines, and this assists in keeping a strong focus on learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets requirements and is significantly enriched by frequent trips and events and a varied programme of lunchtime clubs. This adds considerably to the pupils' enjoyment of school. All the pupils, including those with additional difficulties, are fully included in activities.

Programmes in personal, social and health education (PSHE) underpin much of the school's work and these have a significant impact on pupils' achievement in their personal skills, their knowledge about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle and about their own safety. There are well-managed and very effective programmes in basic skills, especially since teachers add rigour to their planning by making good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The resources and the programmes in ICT are outstanding and pupils make excellent progress in this area. The arrangements for vocational and work related learning are good. The opportunities for pupils to gain appropriate vocational qualifications, however, are limited. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a well organised work experience programme and the success of this is reflected in the excellent levels of continuing further education or training when pupils leave. The 'Leavers' programme in Year 11 is outstandingly effective in giving pupils confidence in their life skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The physical and emotional care of pupils is outstanding. There are rigorous safeguarding procedures, such as child protection procedures and checks on staff and these help to ensure the school is a safe and happy place. Parents find this reassuring and pupils greatly appreciate it. Pupils make excellent progress in their social and moral skills and in developing their confidence to make independent choices. This is an outstanding strength of the school. Pupils have very good relationships with staff and look to them as trusted providers of guidance and support. Pupils are made aware when they have produced good work but their learning targets are not often enough made clear to them. They are also not sufficiently precise to enable the pupils to understand how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher and senior staff have maintained consistency through a difficult period for the school's leadership and they have successfully led a staff team which helps all pupils to thrive equally and achieve well, and which is committed to seeking improvement. Managers at all levels have a good grasp of the school's strengths and where there needs to be improvement. For instance, they have identified the inconsistencies in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress. As a result, they have prioritised work on systems to enable staff to both analyse the pupils' progress more rigorously and to consistently set clearer and more challenging targets, in order to help pupils achieve even more.

Communication within the school is excellent. The staff feel fully consulted, involved and valued. The quality of professional training is outstanding. This has made a significant contribution to sustaining consistency in the good quality of teaching and, in turn, pupils' good achievement. Resources are well used and the school gives good value for money. Governors provide willing support to the school but their effectiveness is limited because they have not yet devised efficient ways to monitor the school's procedures.

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## 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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

### 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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	3
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

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlawn School, North Tyneside, NE25 9DF

Not long ago I came to your school to see how you were getting on and whether I could suggest anything to make the school better. You made me very welcome and I enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom and at lunchtime. Thank you and well done.

I was only with you for two days. That was long enough for me to realise that you go to a good school. I could see that you all enjoy school very much. There were lots of things that I liked. Here are a few:

- you work hard and make good progress in your work and excellent progress in your personal development
- you have a good range of activities, particularly those that help you become independent and make choices and prepare you for when you leave school
- everyone in the school looks after you very well
- lessons are interesting and you are well taught; this means you enjoy learning and do your best
- your school is well run.

I think the school could improve even further if each bit of progress that you make is carefully written down. This would help the school to give you targets to aim for which you all understood very clearly.

You can help too, just by going on working as hard as you have been doing!

Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Best wishes to you all

Mel Blackband

Lead inspector