

# Woodlands Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312525
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Best

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	247
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graeme Franklin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Linda Forbes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 April 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Alban Crescent Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 5JF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 9532717
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 2076786

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to other primary schools and is smaller than at the time of the previous inspection. It draws pupils from mainly rented and some privately owned homes in the local area. Most children are White British and the proportion from other backgrounds speaking English as an additional language is at the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has fallen since the last inspection and is now similar to the national average. Whilst the number of pupils joining the school other than at the start of Reception is similar to other schools, most of these pupils join after the start of Year 3.

When they start in the Nursery, children's skills and experiences are below, and in some instances well below, those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils in the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of those with learning statements outlining their particular needs is below average.

The headteacher has recently returned from a period of absence following an accident and the deputy headteacher is on secondment.

The school has Healthy Schools and Learning School status.

A playgroup meets each afternoon in the school and breakfast and after school clubs meet daily. These are not managed by the governing body and were inspected separately at the same time as this inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school has been through a difficult time since the last inspection due to the absence of senior staff for a significant period. This has prevented thorough monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly in key areas which it has been working to improve, such as standards. The headteacher's current plans for improvement are fit for purpose and pupils have got off to a calm and businesslike start to the new school year. Satisfactory leadership and management provide the school with a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. When they start in the Nursery, children's skills and experiences are below average, with some well below average in language and social skills. They make good and, for some, very good progress towards the early learning goals so that, by the end of Reception, many achieve the expected standards for their age.

Overall standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. Achievement is broadly satisfactory because, due to inconsistencies in teaching quality, pupils make uneven progress as they move through the school. This is preventing many of them from achieving higher results. At the end of Year 2, overall standards have improved and are now broadly average. Pupils' work is regularly marked and teachers' comments provide praise and encouragement, which is appreciated. However, the school's policy of providing pupils with constructive comments as to how they can improve their work is not consistently applied and they are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. They are successfully encouraged to lead healthy lives through participation in sport and by following a healthy diet. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now similar to the national average. Pupils make a positive contribution to community life, with many volunteering to act as peer mentors or school prefects. In the wider community, the school's willingness to promptly address any negative attitudes, such as racism, supports the development of good community cohesion.

The required curriculum is in place throughout the school, including the introduction of the revised strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy. This is supplemented and enhanced by a good range of activities and extra-curricular provision. Whilst the curriculum is suitably adjusted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, the provision for more able pupils is not consistent.

Although all staff, governors and volunteers have been subject to an enhanced check with the Criminal Records Bureau to ensure their suitability to work with children, the school's single central record of the checks made is incomplete and currently there is no trained deputy child protection officer. Governors contribute considerable experience and expertise. Strong links with parents, the local community and external agencies have helped to maintain its good reputation, particularly for the pastoral care and welfare of pupils.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enjoy good relations with each other and with adults, and readily take responsibility for working independently and for finding and putting away learning resources. The outstanding

emphasis on children's personal development and well-being is pivotal in giving them a very positive start to their school life.

Staff know the children very well and take very good care of them. There are robust arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of children inside and out of doors. The leadership of the EYFS ensures that resources are well used and promotes very effective links with parents and outside agencies. Although day-to-day checks on what children know and can do are good, and successfully help inform the next steps in their learning, the ongoing assessment of children's progress towards the early learning goals is not fully embedded and this dilutes the many strengths evident in the school's provision.

The quality of children's learning and development is good. Children benefit from well organised and carefully planned activities and the calm and consistent approach of adults. There is a very good balance between child-chosen and adult-led activities, and the outside area provides a wealth of interesting and worthwhile activities that promote children's development across the areas of learning. As a result, children are confident, have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the challenge of work and play. Children show particular confidence and skills far beyond those expected for their age in using information and communication technology.

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

- Comply fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding and protecting pupils.
- Improve achievement by ensuring that pupils make consistent progress as they move through the school.
- Ensure that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Regularly and rigorously evaluate agreed action to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' 2008 test results in English at the end of Year 6 are not yet available because those in writing have yet to be confirmed. Teacher assessment in English indicates that pupils' overall performance was broadly average. In mathematics and science, pupils' test results were below average. Although the school's targets at the higher levels were exceeded in mathematics and science in 2008, fewer pupils than predicted reached the national expected level.

In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008, standards in reading and writing were broadly average. This is an improvement compared with the previous two years, with the school's recent focus on writing successfully increasing the number of pupils gaining the higher levels. However, this was at the expense of the higher levels in mathematics which fell to below average.

Contrary to the national picture, boys have performed better than girls in core subjects at both key stages in each of the last two years. Pupils who have specific difficulties with reading and writing make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. More able pupils make satisfactory progress overall but the school's recent focus on raising their standards to higher levels has not yet led to consistent improvements. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to others.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is good. There are clear policies to counter bullying and racism within school and the few incidents are dealt with firmly and appropriately logged.

Most pupils enjoy team games and participate enthusiastically. Those who are less keen on physical activity benefit from a fitness coach who provides them with alternative activities. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and run a healthy snack bar. Safety is promoted effectively, with drug awareness and sexual health well promoted with support from outside experts.

The future economic well being of pupils is supported through opportunities such as Young Enterprise and pupils' development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills, although average standards in literacy and numeracy mean that provision is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In many classes, well organised lessons, based on what pupils already know and can do and planned carefully to take account of their differing needs, successfully promote pupils' sustained learning and good progress. However, such practice is not consistent across the school and, as a result, pupils make uneven progress, especially when the planning of subsequent lessons is not sufficiently refined or revised to take account of their performance.

Where learning objectives are clearly explained, pupils know what is expected of them and rise to the challenge. However, on occasions when objectives are less clear, pupils start to lose interest. In these situations teachers have to work hard to focus pupils on their work and do not always insist on agreed classroom routines, such as taking turns to speak.

Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants reflects the good use of the school's resources and gives pupils very positive support. In most lessons, questioning is well used to draw out pupils' thinking and ICT is effectively deployed to support learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and vulnerable pupils is good and enables them to make good progress. They are supported through positive links with professionals from other agencies who provide specialist help. The transition from Reception to Key Stage 1 is being successfully promoted through the provision of a range of indoor and outdoor activities that build on good EYFS practice. However, although the school provides a range of programmes to support pupils who are falling behind in literacy and numeracy, these have not led to lasting improvement for those pupils targeted.

Provision in lessons and assemblies promotes personal development and has a positive impact on health and overall social and cultural development. Visits and visitors support the development of the wider curriculum, including visits to an activity centre, to the theatre and,

for Year 6 pupils, an annual trip to France. Cultural and religious understanding are effectively fostered through visits to places of worship and through celebrating significant festivals of the world's major faiths.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' progress is recorded and monitored throughout the year but steps to ensure consistency in marking so that pupils are clear what they need to do in order to improve their work are not embedded in good practice. Specific programmes target the most vulnerable pupils in order to promote their safety and ability to become full members of the school community. Effective systems enable individuals whose behaviour causes concern to be monitored carefully and suitably supported. There are very positive relationships amongst all members of the school.

Similarly, the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties, both within class and where appropriate through withdrawal to work with specialist teaching assistants, is very effective in helping these pupils to make good progress. This makes a major contribution to enabling the school to be a fully inclusive community.

Suitable risk assessments are in place both within school and for any visits.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's leaders have a good understanding of its strengths and shortcomings and the headteacher has accurately identified the priorities for improvement. The governing body provides solid support and guidance, particularly in helping the school respond successfully to the changing religious, cultural and social make-up of the area. However, records of checks on staff do not meet current requirements because the central record is incomplete and so not monitored adequately.

The school's development plan for the current year provides a satisfactory basis for improvement, focusing all members of the school community on raising achievement. However, the lengthy absences of senior staff during the last two years due to illness have adversely affected previously planned actions to raise achievement and maintain improvements. Subject leaders have worked hard to address issues and have monitored progress towards these but there has not been sufficient evaluation at a senior level to refine and revise actions to ensure success. The school's self-evaluation document does not fully reflect the school's present position although recently revised sections provide an honest and accurate appraisal.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
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**

12 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Borehamwood WD6 5JF

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school last week. We are glad to hear how much you like school and congratulate you on your good behaviour in and around the school. You have got off to a calm and businesslike start to the new school year – well done! We are particularly impressed with your enthusiasm for keeping fit and healthy, and how much you enjoy taking part in out-of-school activities and visits.

You get off to a good start to your school lives in the Nursery and Reception. However, as you move on through the school, you make better progress in some classes than in others. One of the reasons for this is that there are differences in the quality of the teaching you receive. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you can do your very best all the time; please help them by always working hard and telling them when you do not understand what they ask you to do. Your work is regularly marked and you tell us that you like the nice things your teachers say about your work. However, we think you could do better if you had a greater understanding of what you need to improve your work. Again, you can help by taking notice of these suggestions and checking that you have done what you have been asked in your next piece of work.

We are pleased to hear that you have no hesitation about asking for help when you need it. The school makes checks on all the staff, governors and helpers but during our visit, we found that the way in which this information is recorded does not fully meet requirements. In the last two years, some of your teachers have been away from school because they have been ill. This has meant that they have not been able to make regular checks on how well the school is running. We think that the plans Ms Forbes has put in place this term identify what needs to be done to improve the school. Through the school council and other opportunities, you will be able to help the staff to achieve these.

Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best

Lead inspector