

Woodland Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135017
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	316305
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Maher
Headteacher	Mr C Sutcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Regent Street Heywood Rochdale OL10 3BX
Telephone number	01706 620305
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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

Woodland Community Primary school is larger than average and serves a challenging area with high levels of social disadvantage. It has extended school status which means, for example, that activities are available before and after school and in school holidays for pupils to attend. Most pupils are White British and skill levels on entry to the Nursery are very low. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. At the time of the inspection, the school had only been open for 15 months. In September 2006, pupils and staff from three primary schools were brought together in the new building following the closure of those schools. The headteacher was appointed from outside the local authority.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher, senior managers and governing body have successfully established a new school with its own identity, mission statement and way of working. A tremendous amount has been achieved in the very short period of time the school has been opened to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Parents are happy with what the school provides and make comments such as, 'This school is blooming.' Under the strong and highly effective leadership of the headteacher, the school has eradicated any underachievement by pupils in their previous schools and dealt successfully with unsatisfactory behaviour. It has also taken positive steps to improve attendance levels, although these are still too low. The key factors in the school's success in these areas, and also in bringing together as a team staff from three different schools, are good leadership and management. It is hard to envisage what more could have been done in the time available. The school takes full advantage of the extended school's provision to ensure maximum benefit for all pupils. The school achieves satisfactory values for money. It is well placed to raise standards and has good capacity to improve.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because gaps in their progress from their previous schools have been identified and effective steps taken to ensure they all make at least satisfactory progress. On entry to Year 1, standards are below those typical for this age group. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are broadly average but they are below average in English, especially writing. The school is very aware that standards need to improve. The leadership and management team has put in place successful strategies to raise reading and numeracy standards, and pupils' speaking and listening skills, resulting in improved performance in these areas. Progress varies from satisfactory to good between classes because, although some lessons are good, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The best teaching occurs when pupils really know what they need to do to improve. It is less effective when teachers do not clearly explain to pupils, in ways they can easily understand, how they can improve on their previous best.

The satisfactory curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects. The quality and range of extra-curricular provision is outstanding and pupil take up is high. Pupils' attitudes are good because they know staff are interested in what they do and who they are. For example, older pupils talk with tremendous enthusiasm about how they enjoyed participating in an evening 'big sing' event in a large concert hall with hundreds of other pupils taking part. Pupils are polite and well mannered. The before and after-school provision is having a dramatic impact on pupils' overall enjoyment of school and the extended school's provision is beginning to help raise attendance levels. Decisive action by the school's leadership team against pupils with poor behaviour, matched with consistently implemented reward systems mean that pupils now behave well. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and feel proud that trust is shown in them. Within the school's positive climate, pupils have developed a good understanding of the importance of personal safety and a healthy lifestyle. Parents value the good level of care and support given to their children's well-being.

The headteacher has established a good leadership and management team with curriculum leaders leading their areas well. At all levels, including governors, the focus is clearly on school improvement. At times, it is hard to remember that this school has only been in existence for

less than 15 months. The headteacher has correctly identified the right things to move it forward and ensured that the best interest of the pupils is at the heart of everything the school does.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good provision for children's personal development helps them rapidly become more confident and self-reliant. In consequence, they are happy and keen to learn. Children start Nursery class with skills that are well below national expectations. They make satisfactory progress, but their skills in all areas of learning prior to joining Year 1 are below those typical for their age. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory as is the quality of teaching and learning. Following a review of 2007 assessments led by the school's senior management, new approaches are starting to impact on children's learning. For instance, children are responding well to letter sounds being presented in a stimulating way. Firm plans are in place to make the outdoor area more 'child friendly' and to use it better to promote children's learning in all areas. Children enjoy acting out roles, for example, in the highly topical 'Mary and Joseph's stable'. Most girls are keen to write notes and letters, as well as addressing envelopes, but these activities lack appeal for some boys and so they do not write frequently enough to improve their skills. Children's number skills are promoted well. They identify numerals and most can count accurately to 10. Children's understanding of 'one less than' has improved because staff make effective use of songs like '5 little speckled frogs'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Ensure pupils understand learning targets so that they know how to improve their work in order to help them achieve better.
- Raise attendance levels.

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' achievement, including that of pupils with learning difficulties, is satisfactory. Overall results from the schools whose pupils now attend this school were below, and sometimes well below, average. The results in 2007 in both Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly average in mathematics and science, but below average in English because of low writing standards. Both groups of pupils had only attended this school for one year, so the impact on these results by this school needs treating with care. Faced with underachievement, and in some cases inaccurate information on pupils' progress, the school has developed well its own accurate assessment systems to fill in the gaps in pupils' learning. The robust system to track progress by checking learning in all classes shows that attainment has already improved to some degree in both key stages, although writing remains a weakness that is about to become a focus for school improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at school. This is shown in their good behaviour and attitudes towards one another in class and around the school. Effective systems, including the

use of learning mentors, are in place to deal with the small number of pupils who find it difficult to control their behaviour. When asked about school, one pupil enthusiastically said, 'Teachers are good to you and there are lots of kind people!' Relationships are very good. This is quite an achievement since the pupils have only recently been brought together from three different schools. Pupils know a lot about the importance of healthy eating and exercise, and of how to keep safe. A very good variety of activities encourages pupils to participate in physical exercise including football, swimming and cross-country. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and that any incidences of bullying are dealt with immediately. Though attendance is showing signs of improving because of the effective strategies put in place by the school, it remains too low. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are developing an appropriate understanding of the range of cultures and different faiths present in British society. They make a good contribution to the community, for instance, as members of the school council and acting as eco-warriors. They are proud of their fund-raising activities in support of a variety of charities such as Macmillan Cancer Care and The Salvation Army. Pupils' development of the skills needed in later life is satisfactory, inhibited by their low standards in writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to encourage pupils to think for themselves and share ideas. There are examples of good teaching throughout the school, but in some classes teachers do not check that children fully understand what they need to do to improve their work. All teachers manage pupils well and have created classrooms where pupils feel valued and are ready to learn. They plan well together in their year groups to meet the needs of all pupils, although the teaching of writing skills is an area of relative weakness. All teachers make effective use of talking partners to develop speaking skills and to allow pupils time to organise their thoughts before answering a question. They use interactive whiteboards well in most classes to make lessons interesting and to maintain pupils' concentration and interests. Though teachers provide pupils with oral feedback during lessons, marking of written work does not clearly indicate what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Senior management has modified it to meet the needs of the pupils, but it is too early in the school's development for the impact to show on overall standards. New measures, such as the greater emphasis on teaching of letter sounds and reading in groups, are starting to have an impact on pupils' language skills. Provision for pupils to use their writing skills outside English lessons is not strong enough, though very successful theme weeks give some meaningful opportunities to extend their skills. To counter some disaffection and poor behaviour amongst pupils, an

outstanding range of clubs and activities is in place. These activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school, encourage them to attend regularly and provide them with additional opportunities to stay fit. The school offers pupils good music tuition, including chances to learn a musical instrument and sing with the choir. Pupils' computer skills benefit from the complex unit of study covered at the city technology centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for safeguarding pupils, child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are of a good quality. As a result, pupils feel safe and know that anyone will help them if they have a problem. Parents are very pleased with the quality of support their children receive and make comments such as, 'If I have any concerns, there is always a friendly face to talk to. We are making a family. Well done, Woodland!' Pastoral care is given a very high priority. For example, through the school's extended programme, a wide range of activities, including study support, have increased pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Very strong links with outside support agencies add to the effectiveness of the school's very good systems to support pupils' social and emotional needs. Academic guidance is satisfactory but, as a result of good leadership, the school has quickly established assessment systems that are very robust and easy to use. The school recognises that it has to improve the consistency of guidance with regard to literacy and numeracy in order to ensure that all pupils have a good awareness of their individual targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

At all leadership levels there is a clear focus on improving on previous best. As a result, throughout this newly established school pupils make at least satisfactory progress. The headteacher, with the support of the leadership team and governors, has created a learning culture which rewards pupils for attendance, good behaviour and effort. As a direct consequence, behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning are now good. Teamwork amongst staff, who less than 15 months ago worked in three different schools, is particularly strong because they have a common purpose. Senior managers keep a close check on pupils' learning and use the information well to set challenging targets for the end of Year 6 tests. They have thoughtfully deployed teachers so that skills are shared, for example, staff in the same year group planning together. Teaching quality is checked rigorously and all individuals are offered points for improvement, which are followed up in subsequent observations. Middle managers know the standards in their subject through their checking of pupils' work. Through these mechanisms senior managers have a thorough overview of the school and have identified what is going well and what needs further improvement. At the same time, very positive relationships have been developed with parents and partner institutions, which benefit pupils' personal development and learning, and an excellent extended school programme has been established. The governing body is well informed about the school and its work.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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 disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
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

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?	3
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?	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	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you all gave me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We all really enjoyed our time with you and seeing some of you in lessons, even if it was only for a short time.

You have all come together from three different schools into a new building. It is a delight to see you all working hard, behaving and getting on well with each other. I am pleased to tell you that yours is a satisfactory school that is helping you to improve. All the signs are that it will get even better. I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons interesting and that if you need help you get it.

You were all very busy and active at playtimes and lunchtimes and you benefit from large playgrounds and superb after-school clubs. You told me that you feel safe in school and that, if problems occur, an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. The school council is very busy on your behalf and members enjoy being able to take new things forward to make life better for you.

To help make your school even better we have suggested three things in particular. First of all, that teachers should help you work extra hard to improve your writing skills. Also, that they should make sure that you are clear about what you need to do to improve all your work. Finally, you need to make sure you never miss coming to school unless you are too ill to attend.

Keep on working hard and as a result, you can play a major part in ensuring that your school continues to be regarded well by all who come into contact with it. If you do I am sure your school has the potential to become one of the best schools not just in Rochdale but in the whole country!