

Woolley Wood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107180
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324543
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Emerson

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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	67
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Kilby
Headteacher	Ms M Holly
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oaks Fold Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S5 0TG
Telephone number	0114 2456885
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a special school where just over half of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties and the remainder have severe learning difficulties. The number of pupils with medical needs or complex physical difficulties has increased since the previous inspection. A significant minority of pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or sensory impairments. A small number of pupils display challenging behaviour. Although the majority of pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, most of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend the school on assessment places. Far more pupils than average are from minority ethnic groups, with one in four being of Pakistani heritage. Around one in six pupils is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A very small number are in public care. A high number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school works collaboratively with five mainstream primary schools and a secondary school in the Yewlands Family of Schools. The school is a Lead School and holds a number of awards. These include the Gold Artsmark award, Sportsmark and Activemark awards, the national Healthy Schools Standard and Investors in People status. In 2011 the school is scheduled to move to a new building co-located with a mainstream primary school in North Sheffield. There is a separate childcare provision on site which did not form a part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woolley Wood is an outstanding school where the pupils flourish and achieve exceptionally well. The headteacher ensures that all staff share her extremely high aspiration to support every pupil to achieve the very best he or she can. As a consequence of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities standards remain exceptionally low. However, pupils make extremely good progress in relation to their starting points. In particular pupils make huge strides in learning how to communicate and in developing personal and social skills. The school is a highly cohesive community which really celebrates and values the different cultural heritages of the pupils. An example of this was an uplifting assembly where the theme was a 'Muslim wedding'. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the rich sensory experiences they were offered and were very keen to learn about each other's customs. The school is extremely successful in implementing its equality and diversity scheme. Through promoting a very positive picture of diversity and disability within the local community and engaging in a range of projects to support other communities around the world it makes an exceptionally strong contribution to community cohesion.

The curriculum is outstanding and very creative. It is enriched extremely well by art and music. For example, through participating in 'The Great Art Quest': the pupils worked with visiting artists, attended workshops at local galleries and went to London to work with a well known artist. There is very good emphasis on developing early skills in literacy and numeracy. Higher attainers make excellent progress in reading through carefully planned phonics groups. Pupils are set challenging targets firmly based on very thorough assessment and meticulous tracking of their progress. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers use information gained from assessment extremely well to plan lessons. As a result all lessons and other activities are exceptionally well adapted to take account of each pupil's particular learning needs. Lessons are very lively and great fun and underpinned by excellent relationships and outstanding individual support for pupils. Staff are extremely skilled at praising good achievement and effort. This ensures that pupils receive very good guidance about how well they are doing and how to improve further. Consequently, pupils enjoy the lessons a great deal and join in enthusiastically. Personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and pupils try very hard to do their best. The small number with challenging behaviour respond very well to the consistent implementation of positive behaviour management strategies. A few with complex medical conditions have disrupted attendance because of ill health and hospitalisation. However, attendance is good overall. Some pupils have very good attendance. Pupils make excellent progress in learning how to stay safe and healthy. Projects, such as the Christmas enterprise project, where they make and sell articles at the school Christmas fair, help them to contribute to the community and learn about the world of work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The school is very sensitive to the needs of the more vulnerable pupils and provides excellent care and support. This is strengthened by the exceptionally strong links with health personnel and parents. Parents and carers are very positive about the support that their children receive. Current government safeguarding requirements are fully met. Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding and reflect the exceptionally high commitment of all staff to make the very best provision for the pupils. The governing body has a wealth of relevant experience. Governors know the school very well. Their monitoring is exemplary. As a result they fulfil their

role extremely effectively. The school has made excellent improvement since the last inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further. It provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage offers children an outstanding start to their education. Extremely sensitive support and very good links with parents and carers enable the children to settle well and make very rapid progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has excellent teaching skills and provides extremely strong leadership for the staff team. A wide variety of stimulating activities keep children highly focused and interested. For example, they really enjoy very well planned practical opportunities such as baking and water play. These enable the children to make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. All staff know the children very well and match work set so that it is at just the right level for individual children. Children with the most complex needs are given an excellent variety of sensory experiences. Higher attaining children are supported very well to develop their self help and independence skills. There is a very effective focus on teaching children how to communicate. As a result the children make particularly strong progress in their communication and personal and social skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement. The school has already properly identified all minor areas for development and is successfully addressing these.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school's excellent tracking systems demonstrate clearly that pupils make exceptionally good progress in English, mathematics and science. As a result of the good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection, the rate of progress has improved. Taking account of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils achieve challenging targets at a very rapid rate. Pupils' progress in learning how to communicate using speech, signs, symbols or switches is particularly strong. This is because teachers and support staff are very skilled at creating opportunities for pupils to practice these skills. Pupils with more complex needs such as those with ASD or profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve very well because they are given excellent individual support. An example of this was when a pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties made excellent progress in learning to press a switch to operate a sound beam. The pupil was highly engaged and showed great enjoyment as her efforts resulted in a stream of sounds. This encouraged her to press the switch again. Pupils whose condition is deteriorating are helped to maintain their skills for as long as possible. The very good provision for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language ensures that these pupils make as strong progress as other pupils. Pupils from ethnic minority groups and boys make particularly good progress. The school is fully aware of this and has strategies in place to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils try very hard in lessons and in most instances their behaviour around the school is exemplary. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They make exceptionally good progress in developing early social skills such as learning to take turns and

share equipment. The few pupils who, because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities are challenging respond well to very skilled management by staff and begin to modify their behaviour. They learn to calm down quickly so that lessons are not disrupted. Pupils come to an excellent understanding of right and wrong and the needs of others in response to outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They make a very good contribution to both the school and the wider community. The way in which the school supports the school council to enable pupils to have a voice is impressive. The excellent programme of personal and social education ensures that pupils have a very good understanding about how to stay healthy and safe. There are effective procedures in place to encourage good attendance. Consequently, attendance is good overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. There are very effective systems in place to monitor teaching and to train and coach teachers and support staff. As a result teaching is better than at the previous inspection. Teachers and support staff understand pupils' individual needs exceptionally well. Work set is based on accurate assessment and presented at exactly the right level for individual pupils. Outstanding team work and very well targeted individual support ensures that all pupils are fully included in lessons and learn very well. Lessons are extremely lively and teachers make very good use of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) to engage the pupils. Staff are particularly skilled at utilising every opportunity to create rich sensory experiences for pupils with more complex needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The very rich and varied curriculum has an excellent focus on promoting social and independence skills and helping pupils to communicate. There is very good provision to enable pupils to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Participation in the National Pilot of Primary Specialism in science has resulted in exciting activities such as science week. The curriculum is highly personalised and very well adapted for pupils with additional needs such as ASD or sensory impairments and for pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The sensory curriculum for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is excellent. Provision for music and art is exemplary with joyful music and singing filling the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has maintained the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support identified in the previous report. Pupils have comprehensive care plans which are followed consistently. As a result they receive excellent support throughout the school day. Outstanding links with outside agencies, including health personnel and therapists, and with parents and carers ensure that pupils' individual needs are extremely well met. Staff are highly skilled at reinforcing pupils immediately for important behaviours such as 'good looking'. As a result pupils are given very good guidance as to how to improve further. All procedures for child protection, the safe recruitment of staff, health, safety and risk assessment are fully in place. The school benefits from the headteacher taking the lead role for safeguarding in the Family of Schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership that has been recognised through her wider role in the local authority, for example, in coaching headteachers in other special schools. She is highly skilled at promoting staff development. As a consequence, leaders at all levels in the school function very well. With this very strong lead, the school actively embraces innovative opportunities such as to play a key role in the Family of Schools. The quality of planning and organisation is exceptionally good and excellent systems are in place to underpin an extremely effective school. Monitoring and evaluation, including the analysis of information gained from assessment, are excellent. As a result the school has a very accurate view of how well it is doing and knows exactly what it needs to do to improve further. Leaders are very effective in promoting community cohesion and equality and diversity both within the school and in the wider community. Governance is outstanding and there are very well developed links between governors and the school leadership team. The school improvement plan is an excellent tool to move the school forward. The challenging targets which the school sets for itself are regularly reviewed and frequently exceeded.

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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	4
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	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 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**

Inspection of Woolley Wood School, Sheffield, S5 0TG

I know that some of you find reading very difficult, so your teachers will tell you about this letter. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed finding out about the things you are doing and talking to you. It was lovely to come to your assembly and to see you singing and dancing together.

Your parents and carers think you go to an excellent school and I agree with them.

There are many things that are really outstanding in your school. These include:

- the excellent care and support which you are given so that you feel safe and learn very well
- the excellent progress which you make in learning to communicate and in developing your social and independence skills
- all the interesting things you do, especially the creative work in art and music
- the exceptionally good teaching which enables you to learn extremely well in lessons.

All of this is possible because the headteacher, staff and governors do a fantastic job and try their very best to make the school as good as they can for you.

I hope you carry on enjoying what you are doing and continue to help your teachers all you can.