

Woodside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111125
Local Authority	Halton
Inspection number	325296
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoff Lawrence

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	184
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	Mr K Wooldridge
Headteacher	Dr I Keogh
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Whitchurch Way Halton Lodge Estate Runcorn Cheshire WA7 5YP
Telephone number	01928 564031
Fax number	01928 591538

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school, which serves an area of high social and economic deprivation. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage. More than half the children are eligible for free school meals. Almost half of all pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school has a well above average number of children with a statement of special educational need in the main school. The school also has a 14-place unit for Key Stage 2 pupils who have a statement of special educational need for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. In addition to these pupils, a very high percentage of pupils join the school during Key Stage 2, all of whom have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or have been excluded from other schools. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a Reception class. A private nursery operates on the site and this was subject to its own inspection, the report from which can be found separately in the Ofsted website. The school holds the following awards: the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark Silver award.

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. It has outstanding features in the quality of care, guidance and support provided and the way in which it includes all pupils and promotes equality of opportunity. These are significant factors in helping the pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. It is also why parents rate the school so highly.

Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress throughout the remainder of the school. Good teaching has led to standards rising consistently since the last inspection. Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen and are now in line with the national average.

Many children enter school after Year 2 and all of them have experienced problems in other schools. However, they receive excellent support and achieve well compared with their capabilities. Standards have risen consistently since the last inspection when they were exceptionally low. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average overall but the school is rapidly closing the gap between its own performance and the national average. Given the varied starting points of many pupils who join partway through the school this represents good achievement for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. Most notable gains have been in mathematics, which is now in line with the national average. This has been due to well-focused strategies by the school to promote key skills such as basic calculation and rapid recall of number. However, the gains in English at Key Stage 2 have not been as rapid because pupils' writing is particularly weak. Nevertheless, it is getting better and recent initiatives that have improved reading skills have not been in place long enough to have had a sufficient impact on writing standards.

The curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning are good and teachers use assessment information well to match work to pupils' needs. However, it is through the quite exceptional care, guidance and support given to pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, and the concern for their well-being, that the school has its biggest impact. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, make good progress in their personal development, especially in their confidence and belief in themselves as learners. The school's success at integrating pupils from the 14-place unit into mainstream classes could hardly be bettered. This is why behaviour and personal development are good and pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. It is also why pupils were prompted to make comments such as, 'This school is like a big happy family'. This view was endorsed by parents.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and of how to stay safe. They are adamant that bullying is not an issue in this school. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do next to improve. They take their responsibilities around school seriously. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school works hard to prepare its pupils for a place in a culturally diverse society. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good and is very responsive to the needs of the local community.

Good leadership and management have been the driving force behind the good improvement since the last inspection and the rise in standards. The school has successfully improved attendance so that it is currently around the national average. It has done this through a range of successful measures and, in part, through its excellent partnerships with the local authority and support agencies.

Woodside is a school that strives to provide a happy and secure environment, where procedures for safeguarding are in place and where all children are included and challenged to achieve academically. Based on recent improvements, the school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make a solid start to their education. Most children enter Reception having had some pre-school experience. They make satisfactory progress in most areas but make good gains in personal, social and emotional development because adults ensure that personal development and welfare receive a high priority. This helps children to form good relationships and develop positive attitudes. Staff are enthusiastic and care well for the children in a safe and secure environment, where satisfactory leadership has ensured that their welfare requirements are met. Teaching is satisfactory and adults are conscientious in assessing pupils' progress. However, these assessments are not sufficiently accurate and often overestimate children's ability and this means that they are not fully effective in planning for individual children's next steps in learning. While staff have created a stimulating indoor environment, the outdoor area is extremely small and underused. The school recognises that the lack of a well-developed and resourced outdoor learning area is restricting the opportunities for children to practise and extend their experiences in all areas of their learning. It has plans to address this but these have not yet been implemented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the outdoor provision and range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities to extend their learning.
- Improve the accuracy of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage to plan more effectively for children's next steps in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good overall progress by the time they leave the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen from below average to broadly average overall. This can be attributed to good teaching and effective strategies to improve reading, writing and pupils' mathematical knowledge. In Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics, English and science have also risen significantly over the last four years. Given the high number of pupils joining the school, the school has met some challenging targets. The most rapid progress has been seen in mathematics because the accurate identification of pupils' deficiencies in mathematical understanding is followed by the implementation of focused teaching activities. Improvements in English however, have not been as rapid and while reading has improved, standards in writing have remained relatively weak. Nevertheless, they are beginning to improve because of newly implemented strategies, the full impact of which has yet to be realised. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils because of the high quality support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

It is difficult to imagine a more inclusive school and this is exemplified by the way in which the many new pupils are welcomed and accepted by others. Pupils get on well together and exhibit good behaviour in the classroom and around school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are aware of their responsibilities to each other and the community, raising funds for both local and international charities. Their fundraising to provide drinking water in Ghana has contributed to their appreciation and understanding of other cultures. This is an important feature in a school with a low proportion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. They eat healthily and enjoy taking part in the themed food weeks. There is a high take-up of extra-curricular activities and this adds to their excellent enjoyment of school. These features have contributed to pupils' improved attendance, which is now average. Pupils display some good personal skills and qualities, which equip them well for the next stage in their education and later life. However, the below average standards in writing mean that overall they are only satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is some variation in the quality of teaching, but it is good overall and this enables pupils to learn well as they move through the school. In the few lessons seen where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of learning was slower because pupils spent long periods listening to lengthy lesson introductions. Teachers generally prepare challenging tasks of different levels of difficulty that suit the individual learning needs of groups of pupils, including the more able. Teaching assistants are attached to every class and they play a very significant role in the teaching and support for children, particularly those who are vulnerable. It also enables teachers to give the pupils a good deal of individual attention. For their part, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, listening carefully and working well individually and cooperatively. Relationships are excellent, and all teachers manage children's behaviour positively and effectively. Marking is particularly thorough, with teachers making it clear to children what they have achieved and how to improve further. The school is a stimulating environment for learning, inside and outside, with celebrations of children's work and wall displays of high quality that provide information and guidance to children in lessons. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to stimulate and motivate pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum of good quality. Basic skills feature highly with skills sessions in mathematics and English at the start of every day. This is helping to raise standards but the school recognises that more opportunities need to be provided to improve writing skills further. The school links subjects together well. For example, lessons in physical education are sometimes taught in French. Pupils say that this approach makes learning more interesting and has contributed to the school's good start at introducing a foreign language. The curriculum is well matched to the diverse needs of the pupils and this helps them to access the curriculum at their level and contributes to inclusion. The pastoral curriculum is of outstanding quality. It promotes pupils' personal development very well and successfully

challenges and supports them in developing their emotional well-being and self-esteem. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities for pupils that is enhanced by several residential visits: these are very popular with pupils. ICT is well integrated and used effectively to promote learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding because the commitment of all the staff to each child is exceptional. Nurture classes effectively support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they can achieve as well as others. The school has had significant success in supporting pupils who have transferred from other schools. This is because of their flexible approach in focusing on the emotional as well as academic needs of the child. This helps them to achieve well. The school works very closely with the local authority and outside support agencies. Senior staff monitor and track the progress pupils make very thoroughly, making use of a whole range of assessments. Performance is carefully analysed to identify areas for improvement. The policies to safeguard children and promote their health and safety are all in place, are monitored and fully meet the government's requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher knows the school well and the communities it serves. The school's commitment to, and promotion of, community cohesion within the locality is a strength and enables it to meet the needs of the pupils and parents well. The headteacher has been highly effective in developing a good team that has the skills to move the school forward and developing a school where equality of opportunity and inclusion receive the highest priority and have become part of school life. There has been a strong focus on improving standards but the school has never lost sight of its need to provide high quality care and to promote pupils' personal development. The senior leadership team are conscientious in carrying out their role in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. This aspect has improved since the last inspection and rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance has led to improved standards and better attendance as well as an accurate evaluation of its own performance. The governors' role in monitoring has not progressed at the same pace, however they provide a satisfactory level of support and challenge to the school. Subject leaders are well informed and beginning to make an impact on standards. Excellent links exist with parents and outside agencies to support the work of the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Thank you for making us so welcome during the recent inspection. I really enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work. I was impressed by your good behaviour and how friendly you all were. I enjoyed finding out about the things you like in school. I really enjoyed watching some of you 'speed stacking'.

You, and most of your parents, are right in thinking you go to a good school. Those responsible for running the school do their job well. Staff care deeply for you and they work very hard, not only to help you learn as much as you can, but also to help you to develop into confident young people. You told me your teachers are good and they find ways to make learning fun and help you to make good progress. You are right. You know what a healthy lifestyle is and how to keep yourself and others safe. It was good to see that your attendance has improved. As most of you know, the better your attendance is the better chance you have of doing well.

Within all its good work, there are three things the school should do to help make it even better. I have seen that your standards are rising and you are doing better in mathematics. However, the standards in writing are still too low. I want the school to help those of you in Key Stage 2 to reach higher standards in your writing. I have also asked the school to improve the outdoor area for the Reception class and to improve the accuracy of checking how well the youngest children are doing so that teachers are able to plan activities for them that will help them to make better progress.

Thank you once again for helping me.

I enjoyed my time with you and your teachers. I hope that you continue to work hard and enjoy school.