

Woolston Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111182
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	325306
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	283
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 C Shipton
Headteacher	Mrs J Elshaw
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hall Road Woolston Warrington Cheshire WA1 4PA

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Inspection number	325306

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Woolston Community Primary School is larger than average. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is low. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is low. The school has Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woolston Community Primary School provides an outstanding quality of education. Its commitment to ensure all achieve their best is at the heart of its work. Achievement is outstanding. Children join the school with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age and, for a significant proportion of children, particularly low in communication and literacy skills. By the end of Year 6, children attain standards which are well above average in science and English and, although standards in mathematics are lower, they are nonetheless above average. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The school provides a stimulating and supportive learning environment and all of its staff are committed to ensuring all pupils achieve their best, both academically and personally. Adults know individual pupils very well indeed and regularly give them the opportunity to shine and to experience success. Consequently, as pupils progress through the school, their independence and confidence as learners grows. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support for children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they are able to participate fully in all activities. Higher attaining children are also very effectively challenged to reach their potential.

Children's personal development is excellent. They take pride in their school and have excellent relationships with each other, with their teachers and with other adults. Their behaviour is exemplary. They say that learning is exciting and fun. They express their opinions and ideas clearly and confidently. They value the wide range of opportunities to take responsibility and make decisions. The quality of the care and guidance they receive is excellent. Adults in the school know the children in their care very well indeed, track individual progress closely and set appropriate targets. Pupils are fully involved in this process so that they are able to talk in detail about how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They make sensible choices about healthy living. The school meets statutory requirements to ensure children's safety and the safe recruitment of staff. Attendance is above average and further endorses children's enjoyment of school.

The curriculum is outstanding. From the very beginning children are encouraged to explore ideas for themselves and to talk about their experiences both with adults and with each other. They learn very effectively through role play, solving problems and carrying out investigations. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities to work alongside specialists and a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, very strongly supported by the deputy headteacher provides inspirational leadership and very clear direction. All staff are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. The school sets itself challenging targets, is successful in meeting them, and is continually striving to improve standards further. Standards in English have improved significantly over the last three years and there has been excellent improvement since the last inspection. The school works very effectively with other institutions, outside agencies and with parents and carers, to ensure that all children achieve their best. Parents appreciate the way the school encourages them to be involved in their children's learning through, for example, the home learning programmes. Governors provide very strong support, are very well informed and act very effectively as critical

friends. The school provides excellent value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is outstanding. Children join Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age. Standards of communication, language and literacy as well as knowledge and understanding of the world are particularly low for a significant proportion. Excellent quality provision ensures that this does not inhibit their progress in other areas of learning. During their time in the Reception class children benefit from excellent care and teaching and from a clear focus upon developing communication and language skills in each area of learning. As a result, they begin Year 1 with skills that are broadly in line with expectations and with very positive attitudes towards learning. This represents outstanding achievement. Excellent use is made of both indoor and outdoor facilities. Teachers, teaching assistants and parent helpers all focus on developing children's language skills through a wide range of well planned activities such as role play, simple data collection, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and structured play. The progress individuals make is tracked closely, recorded systematically and reported regularly to parents. The curriculum is closely tailored to their needs and activities planned so that they build very effectively upon previous learning. Children also benefit from a residential visit which not only widens their experience and knowledge of the world but also effectively develops their independence and confidence. Expectations are very high, children respond very positively and have excellent relationships with adults. Leadership and management are outstanding. The EYFS leader works very effectively with pre-school providers locally, as well as carrying out home visits before children start school, to ensure that they feel comfortable and settle quickly into the Reception class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to match the high standards in English and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain above average results in reading, writing and mathematics. Published results in 2007 show lower, below average, proportions of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3), due to the school only verifying as Level 3 those who are securely at that level. When all data are taken into account standards are above average. This represents good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils make further good progress in mathematics to attain above average standards. Standards attained in English and science demonstrated in the provisional 2008 results are better than this, being well above average in English and science. The excellent progress in English is due to the focus that the school has had on developing writing, speaking and listening, since the last inspection. Overall, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their classmates, as do pupils with English as an additional language, due to the excellent support and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is enhanced through their appreciation of nature within the school grounds and the opportunity to be involved in the arts through the Primary Arts Network. Pupils display excellent attitudes towards others and towards their learning. They clearly feel both happy and safe in school. They respond enthusiastically to the programme of health education that the school provides, knowing what is good for them in terms of healthy eating and choosing to take exercise at playtimes and lunchtimes. They also take part in the many sport-related after-school clubs. Attendance is above the national average and improving, which is a ringing endorsement of pupils' enjoyment of school. An outstanding contribution is made by pupils to both the school community and the wider world. Pupils take up very many responsibilities in school including that of school councillors, 'play buddies' and play leaders, roles for which they are trained. Through close links with senior citizens in the area, pupils make an outstanding contribution to the local community. Pupils also contribute well to the wider world through fund-raising and links abroad. This and their achievements in English, mathematics, science and ICT prepares them very well indeed for the next stage in education and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. Lessons are very well planned. New ideas are presented very clearly so that pupils rapidly understand and develop them themselves. Activities are very well thought out to engage pupils and are particularly well sequenced so that pupils build very effectively on previous learning. Activities are very well designed to ensure all pupils frequently experience success and they are regularly given opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing. This has led to a significant improvement in standards in English. There is a high degree of consistency in approach, expectations and focus in lessons. Teachers use questioning very effectively to support and challenge pupils and to establish how well pupils have understood. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to explore ideas, plan and carry out investigations and solve problems. Initial discussions with a partner increase their confidence and, as a result, they are keen to share their ideas with a wider audience. Their ideas are taken seriously and this results in pupils being confident and keen to articulate their ideas. Teachers keep a close eye on individual progress and plan their lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are fully involved in measuring their own progress and deciding next steps in learning. The quality of marking is exemplary indicating clearly the standards achieved and giving excellent guidance about how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Opportunities to practice literacy skills across the curriculum together with the introduction of 'The Big Write' and, more recently, 'The Big Talk' has led to a significant improvement in standards in English. In many areas of their learning pupils benefit from the opportunity to work alongside specialists in history, music, French and sport as well as poets and artists and people from the immediate community. The school makes full use of its wildlife area and pond

to encourage pupils' curiosity and appreciation of the world around them. The curriculum is enriched by the opportunity to learn French from the Reception class onwards, take part in a European Languages day and a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities and visits. This includes residential experiences from the Reception class onwards. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and to take part in themed days. ICT is used well to support and extend learning. Year 6 pupils are able to take laptops home with them and therefore have the opportunity to access programmes used in class to consolidate and extend their learning at their own pace. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is also excellent and includes science and art days at the local high school, and mathematics at a local university.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a secure environment where pupils feel valued and safe. All staff are committed to enabling all pupils to achieve as well as they can. There is excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. As a result, these pupils participate fully in all activities and make the same outstanding progress as their classmates. The school has excellent links with outside agencies and partner institutions to remove barriers to learning and development and ensure a smooth transition from one stage of education to the next. The tracking of pupils' progress is a well developed system which identifies pupils who are achieving below expectations and triggers appropriate support to accelerate their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher empowers staff at all levels to be innovative and have confidence in putting their ideas into practice. Appropriate training is provided so that staff as well as pupils can reach their potential. Her vision of continually striving to ensure all, both staff and pupils alike, achieve their best is shared and valued by everyone associated with the school. All staff and governors are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement procedures. Monitoring of pupils' progress and of teaching and learning is rigorous and is carried out at all levels of management. The school's own evaluation of the quality of its work, based firmly on rigorous analysis of assessment information, is honest and accurate, although often too modest. Priorities are identified and school improvement planning is focused upon raising standards further. The school runs very efficiently and effectively. Procedures, for example, for monitoring and evaluation are understood by all. Outstanding teamwork amongst pupils, staff and parents is a characteristic of this school. Staff are encouraged to share their ideas and spread good practice both within the school and within the local authority. The school has excellent links with partner institutions, local agencies and the local community and promotes a high level of understanding of other communities, both at home and abroad. This promotes outstanding community cohesion. Governors are very well informed and provide outstanding support and challenge to 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?	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	2
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 Woolston Community Primary School, Warrington, WA1 4PA

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views.

I'm sure you will be interested, but not at all surprised, to know that your school is an outstanding one. You are very well looked after. Teaching is excellent and helps you to achieve your best. You told us how much you enjoy your lessons and it was easy to see why. Teachers work very hard to provide lots of exciting activities for you so that you can explore ideas for yourselves, not only in the classroom but also outside and through the special themed days you have. You told us how much you enjoyed these activities and how much they helped you to learn.

We were particularly impressed by how well you worked together in pairs and small groups to explore ideas for yourselves in lessons and how well you explained your ideas to others. Younger children in the Reception class also make excellent progress because they, too, are encouraged to explore things for themselves and to discuss their ideas with each other.

The teachers have been working hard to help you improve your writing recently and this has been very successful. Although you achieve well in mathematics, we think you can do even better. So we have asked the teachers to help you do as well in mathematics as you do in English and science.

I hope you continue to enjoy your learning. I wish you every success in the future.