

Woodlea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114009
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325926
Inspection date	30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	237
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 Gail Kennedy
Headteacher	Mr Philip Adamson
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fence Houses Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH4 6AR
Telephone number	0191 385 2675
Fax number	0191 385 2699

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in meeting the needs of all children; pupils' achievement and standards; progress made by the school in tackling the area for improvement at the previous inspection, notably standards of attainment in writing; the school's assessment and marking practices and how these are used to plan learning for all pupils and the quality of teaching and learning in all parts of the school.

Evidence was collected from school documentation, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, nationally published assessment data, reports from the local authority, the school's records of pupils' progress and observations of lessons. Discussions were held with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. The 112 questionnaires returned by the parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is located in the former mining village of Fence Houses, approximately six miles north east from Durham City. Most pupils live in the immediate catchment of the school although an increasing proportion travel from other areas. A relatively low number of pupils are eligible for a free school meal and almost all pupils are White British. A lower than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has been successful in achieving a number of nationally recognised awards, including the International School Award, Quality Charter Mark 4, Healthy School Status and the Activemark. The school provides for the Early Years Foundation Stage through a Nursery and Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodlea Primary School continues to provide its pupils with an excellent quality of education. The headteacher and staff have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection and the underlying trend is securely one of improvement. The large majority of parents who made their views known to the inspection team are highly complimentary about the school's work and the outcomes it achieves for pupils.

Children enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour and attitudes to work and each other are exemplary. Attendance is above average with the large majority of pupils arriving punctually and ready to start learning. They know the difference between right and wrong, showing maturity and commitment in upholding the school's values. These are reflected in their conduct. Relationships are strong. Pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy lifestyles and the importance of exercise and diet; the majority make good choices in what they eat at lunchtime. Pupils confirm they are safe in school. They are confident that staff will help if problems arise and older pupils in particular show a keen awareness of how to resolve matters which cause disagreements. The school council are active in promoting the views of pupils. They take their roles seriously and consider that their comments and ideas lead to improvement. They can identify several examples where their suggestions have been acted upon. Highly effective support prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their learning. Attainment in basic skills is high; pupils are excellent at working in teams with many demonstrating good leadership qualities when given opportunity to do so.

Standards at Key Stage 1 have remained above average in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection. In 2008 pupils attained standards which were significantly above expected levels in writing and mathematics although not enough more able pupils attained highly particularly in reading. Standards at Key Stage 2 continue to be exceptionally high because throughout Years 3 to 6, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. In 2008, all pupils attained at least the expected level for their age in English and science and almost all did so in mathematics. A significantly higher than average proportion attained high levels in each subject.

Teaching is excellent leading to impressive gains in pupils' learning. Pupils work hard, concentrate well and listen respectfully to the views of their classmates. Explanations, demonstrations and instructions are very clear and effective in promoting pupils' interest and enjoyment. Teachers strive hard to make lessons exciting with a good range of resources evident, with exceptionally effective use of information and communication technology (ICT). Planning is thorough and based securely on accurate assessment information. Teachers make certain that the needs of all pupils are catered for well. Actions taken by the school ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their writing in other subjects. Teachers' marking is insightful, providing children with accurate feedback about how well they have done against their targets and about what is required to improve further. Teachers make sure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and what is expected of them.

The excellent curriculum fully meets the needs of all learners. It reflects the many external awards gained and offers an interesting and challenging range of activities from which pupils benefit greatly. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to the high standards being attained. Incremental changes have gradually expanded the range of experiences on offer to pupils within and beyond the teaching day including residential visits to the Lake District and

Paris. Subjects are linked where appropriate and pupils work productively using literacy and numeracy very well in other subjects. Pupils benefit from a wide range of additional activities provided by the school and take up is high; these activities are clearly popular with pupils. In addition, effective use is made of visitors to expand on the expertise available in the school.

Pastoral care for pupils is exceptionally good and a strength of the school. It contributes markedly to pupils' feelings of security and confidence and provides a strong foundation for their work and progress. All safeguarding and health and safety procedures are in place and rigorously enforced. Much has occurred since the previous inspection to improve assessment and target setting. These are increasingly strong features of the school's work.

The headteacher and the school's senior leadership have been highly effective in maintaining a secure focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. This has ensured that standards have remained very high and that the large majority of pupils make fast progress commensurate with their capabilities and starting points. Targets are challenging reflecting the senior leadership's high expectations of pupils' capabilities. Self evaluation is accurate and detailed, if a little modest. School development priorities are well understood and direct action has led to improvements in key areas. Members of staff, appointed since the previous inspection, have settled well and have become very effective. The school understands local needs well with a range of options either in place or planned to support the community. International links have developed well with schools in Uganda and France helping to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures. Governors demonstrate a keen awareness of the school's performance and receive regular and timely information from which to make decisions. They are appreciative of the leadership's success in maintaining high standards but are challenging across all areas of the school's work. The school demonstrates excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good with outstanding features. Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical for their age. They get off to a good start. Provision for their learning and development is effective and this helps them to achieve well. The large majority make good progress so that by the end of the Reception class, their attainment is mostly above that expected nationally in all six areas of learning. Systems to support children's welfare are highly effective. Engagement with families begins with home visits so that children get to know the staff before they begin Nursery. Daily conversations and weekly diaries ensure regular contact with parents is maintained. Children's welfare is extremely well promoted, consequently children gain in confidence. The introduction of a named adult for each child means that staff know children well. Children are very well motivated to learn and staff interact effectively with them, helping to move their learning forward. During focused activities adults explain clearly, question effectively and encourage children to think hard. Planning covers all areas and is topic based. Children show great enjoyment in learning, for example, when watching eggs hatch, observing snails and finding small creatures outdoors. There is a good balance between directed activities and those which children choose for themselves. The range of opportunities on offer indoors is good although outdoor activities are more limited in developing children's knowledge and skills. Leadership is good and teamwork is strong with a clear vision for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all more able pupils attain at levels commensurate with their capabilities and starting points at Key Stage 1.
- Extend the range of outdoor opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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?	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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	2
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**

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlea Primary School, Durham, DH4 6AR

It was a pleasure to meet you all when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. Our particular thanks go to the school council for giving up part of their lunchbreak to speak with us and to all those pupils who were keen to share their views of Woodlea. You were all a credit to your school. Well Done!

Your school provides you with an excellent education. Mr Adamson, the staff and governors work exceptionally hard on your behalf and their efforts, and yours, are rewarded through the very high standards which you attain and the excellent progress which you make in your learning. Teaching is outstanding and you benefit from a very varied and interesting curriculum. Teachers use assessments of your work well to make sure that learning always meets your needs. The staff make great efforts to ensure you are safe and well cared for and they are successful. You told us that you feel safe and secure in school and we could see that in your excellent behaviour and the way that you take care of each other. We were particularly impressed by the way older pupils look after the welfare of younger children.

Even an excellent school can improve so we have asked Mr Adamson, the staff and governors to make sure that:

- more pupils reach the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics assessments by the end of Year 2
- better use is made of the Nursery and Reception outdoor learning area so that the very youngest children in school have more learning opportunities to help them develop their knowledge and skills.

We are sure that you can think of ways in which you can help the staff and governors to make progress in these two areas. Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Tom Grieveson HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector