

Woodhouse Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131919
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	328658
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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)	197
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	Rev Brenda Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Welsh
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Walker Drive Bishop Auckland DL14 6QW
Telephone number	01388 602885

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Inspection number	328658

Fax number

01388 450658

Age group 3-11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a below-average sized school situated on the outskirts of a large housing estate in Bishop Auckland. There is a very high level of social and economic disadvantage in the area served by the school and the proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is high. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are White British. The school formed from the amalgamation of an infant and junior school almost two years ago. Pupils are able to attend a daily breakfast club held on site. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and a Reception class working together. Recent awards include Investing in Children, an Activemark and an Intermediate International School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Woodhouse is a satisfactory school. It is improving, particularly in the care, guidance and support given to its pupils. This results in the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Parents appreciate all the support their children receive. They pay tribute to the approachability of the headteacher, the staff and the assistance provided by the parent support adviser. Standards are below average. Based on very low starting points into the Early Years Foundation Stage and below average standards by the time they leave school in Year 6 pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the effective additional support they receive and the thoroughness of the recently introduced systems to track their progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils say they feel safe in the playground because they can rely on the support of buddies if needed. Despite considerable efforts by the school and with the support of the local authority, attendance is below average. Pupils enjoy school and say how calm it is. They also appreciate it because there is always someone to listen to their problems. Pupils work hard and they are spurred on by the rewards for good achievement given out in the weekly celebration assembly.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons teaching features clear expectations and the recall of prior learning, along with the use of probing questions. Everyone contributes and pupils are encouraged to explain what they are learning. However, this is inconsistent across the school because sometimes teaching confuses what the pupils are going to do with what they have to learn and expectations for the presentation of work are too low. Assessment arrangements are improving. There are good systems in place to involve pupils in assessing their learning and that of their peers. Pupils' work is generally marked thoroughly but is let down occasionally when it does not make clear what the pupils need to do next. The curriculum is satisfactory and is beginning to give a priority to developing basic skills. Improvements in the use of information and communication technology are notable in the electronic presentations developed in Year 6. Standards in literacy and numeracy lessons are improving. The application of these skills in other work is beginning to improve but is hampered to some extent by weaknesses in handwriting. Pupils enjoy a number of after school sports clubs and understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's strong sense of commitment has set a clear steer for the development of the school based very firmly on raising standards for every pupil. The introduction of an effective system to monitor the progress pupils make as they go through school provides staff with a means of evaluating the impact they are making. As a result, motivation is improving and teamwork is developing well. Development is needed for some staff, but members of the senior leadership team are well-placed to do this. The school plays a pivotal role in the local community and is forging links with several organisations to develop partnerships, for example, with the local police, social services and organisations that support pupils with behavioural issues. There are effective links further afield that are helping pupils to understand the diversity across the world, for example links with France and Tanzania. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children start the Nursery with skills in all areas of learning that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy development. They make satisfactory progress overall and by the time they leave the Reception class, they are achieving satisfactorily although they are attaining below average in all areas of learning apart from personal, social and emotional development which is in line with national expectations. Provision is good for personal development. Children enjoy playing and learn to develop independently and to take responsibility for snack time and self-registering each morning as they arrive. They learn to play harmoniously and to share equipment. Most of the time adults are skilled in encouraging children to talk about matters of immediate interest, such as the daily routines when cooking and going shopping. Occasionally, children come together as a large group which is less effective in developing children's communication skills. There is a satisfactory balance between learning inside and outside and children generally have the choice to play in either. While small group sessions give a high priority to learning spoken and written sounds so that children begin to match letters and sounds, the provision for sharing and reading books is restricted due to limitations of comfortable, inviting areas to do so. There are effective strategies to ensure that the children are well cared for. Welfare arrangements meet requirements. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve basic skills, especially in handwriting, throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the quality of teaching to provide pupils with the support and challenge needed to make good progress in their learning.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so they have the necessary skills to coach and support teaching and learning in their subjects
- Improve attendance.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards and achievement are improving. Based on their very low starting points into the Early Years Foundation Stage and below average standards reached by the time they leave Year 6, achievement is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities make good progress as a result of their effective support. The recent introduction of a detailed system to track the progress of pupils every half term in the core subjects shows that many pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and actions are in place to support those that are not. This improvement in standards in literacy and numeracy skills is also a result of the impact of improvements in teaching. The results of the most recent national tests in Key Stage 1 and 2 do not show comparison with previous years as this is the school's first year of results, but they are below average in both Key Stages in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The school successfully fosters very caring relationships and a positive ethos in lessons and assemblies which successfully promote pupils' good spiritual welfare, moral social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They know the importance of a balanced diet. Many enthusiastically take part in physical activities both during the day and in the voluntary after-school clubs where gymnastics is particularly popular. Pupils thoroughly enjoy team games and competitive sport. The school deservedly holds the Activemark award. The school effectively places a high priority on the safety of its pupils. Pupils feel safe and secure in coming to school, as a result of the successful 'walking bus' initiative which encourages many to walk to and from school together. Pupils say that levels of bullying are low and any incidents are effectively addressed. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils respond considerately to others in the open parts of the school. Pupils work with noticeable endeavour and become thoroughly involved in lessons. Overall contribution to the community is satisfactory with strengths in the role pupils play in school life. Many take on responsibilities which make a noteworthy contribution to the community ethos of the school. The school council has enhanced the grounds with trees and plants and made playtime more enjoyable. A buddy system promotes friendships and counters bullying. Pupils actively support many charities which add to their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves in other countries. Links with the wider community to develop an understanding of cultural diversity are less well developed. Although they benefit from many opportunities for team working and developing social skills, such as through residential outdoor activities and joint activities with local schools, their lower than average basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Considerable work by the headteacher, with the support of the local authority is beginning to show in the consistently satisfactory teaching in all classes. Lessons are well planned and work is generally well matched to the needs of the pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well as a result. They discuss their learning and have a sound grasp of what they need to do to improve. Whiteboard technology is used effectively to motivate pupils and probing questions help to allay pupils' misconceptions. Relationships are good. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils needing additional help. Prominent, informative displays provide pupils with guidance on how to improve their writing and pupils show good familiarity with their targets to improve their work. At times, pupils' learning is hampered because lessons are not sufficiently challenging and what pupils are expected to learn is not sufficiently related to what they have to do. There is some inconsistency in how teachers share intended learning outcomes. Assessment is satisfactory. Marking is improving but occasionally does not provide pupils with key points to improve. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's learning. They are very happy with the support their children receive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. A balanced range of activities in all subjects helps pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding. Nevertheless, pupils have too few opportunities to develop a sound foundation of basic skills, especially in handwriting. Recent initiatives to make activities more relevant to pupils' experience and the school's circumstances are beginning to show success. For example, pupils studying plants, inspired by a visit to the nearby university botanical garden, have increased their skills in first-hand investigations and extended their use of information and communication technology. Visitors to school and visits outside, such as to heritage and outdoor activity centres, contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. Assemblies, charitable work and partnerships with the Church enhance their spiritual and moral development. Special themed weeks include activities that are effectively increasing pupils' understanding of other cultures. Other aspects of personal and social education, taught through a nationally recognised programme, have made a clear contribution to improving behaviour and the respect and consideration pupils show for others. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular activities, which are mainly sports-orientated. Links with a local secondary specialist sports college enhance pupils' physical development and contribute to their healthy lifestyles. However, there are few extra opportunities for creative activities such as art and music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit greatly from the good care, guidance and support the school provides. Pastoral care is a strength and is characterised by very positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after because the school has well-founded and understood procedures which properly protect and carefully support pupils. Assemblies and a new personal development curriculum make a major contribution to developing pupils' awareness of a spiritual dimension to life and to the consideration and politeness they show to others. Effective measures for safeguarding children are in place, such as those required for child protection, recruiting staff, health and safety and risk assessment for visits and activities. The school successfully encourages the support of parents to help with improving their children's attendance and learning. Very effective use is made of procedures for analysing information about pupils' progress to precisely plan support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for those slipping behind. They have close and effective support and, as a result, many of these pupils make good progress. Crucially pupils receiving intensive support are not excluded from learning with their classmates.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is working with other agencies for the well-being of pupils and is effectively engaging with the local community to build effective relationships with parents and the community. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and is working well with the staff to set up an effective team. The governors provide sound support for this aspect of the school's work. There is a good priority to ensure pupils are well cared for, which permeates the school and is acknowledged as a strength by many parents. All pupils are treated equally and with respect. The school's

self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of the school. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is closely linked to the school's performance management arrangements. Pupils' work and teachers' planning are regularly checked and provide a useful and accurate overview of teaching and learning with the right areas identified for improvement. Target-setting is generally an accurate reflection of the detailed analysis of pupils' attainment and progress and are satisfactorily challenging. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The links with the local community and global communities are good. A valuable parent support adviser works with parents in the local community however, opportunities to celebrate the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom community are less well developed. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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/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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodhouse Community Primary School, Durham, DL14 6QW

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when inspecting your school recently. Please thank your parents too for their comments. You attend a satisfactory school with good features in your personal development and well-being and in the way the school cares and supports you.

What is satisfactory and better about your school is:

- most of you make at least satisfactory progress and some who find learning difficult often make good progress because they listen carefully to the staff who help them
- everyone takes great care of you and ensures you are safe
- you enjoy the visits you make to places like the botanic gardens
- you keep fit through all the sports activities you attend and learn to eat healthily.

I have asked your school to encourage more of you to attend school every day. I hope that you all want to come to school so much that you would not want to stay at home. Your school has been asked to make sure that your lessons are always challenging and your learning is explained so you all understand what you have to do. It would be helpful too if you all tried very hard to improve your basic skills especially to make sure your handwriting is as neat as possible and that you take more care with your work in your books. The school is going to develop the roles of staff who manage the different subjects in your school. Your school is beginning to work hard to ensure you all learn well.

Yours faithfully

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector