

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134236
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	328861
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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)	446
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 Christine Blount
Headteacher	Mr J McEnaney
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Crescent, Woodlands Doncaster South Yorkshire DN6 7RG
Telephone number	01302 722367
Fax number	-

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of the quality of teaching and learning on boys' progress in reading and writing and the more able children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the school's strategies to improve pupils' attendance; and the rigour of leaders', managers' and governors' evaluation of school effectiveness. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons, and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff, the chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence that the school's own assessments of these aspects, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Situated in an ex-mining village four miles from the centre of Doncaster, the school serves a community with high unemployment and significant social problems. The above average number of pupils who join or leave during each term adds to the many challenges the school has to overcome. The school is in three buildings on two separate sites and is much larger than average. The number on roll is rising. It has provision for EYFS with children taught in two Nursery and two Reception classes. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic families or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Woodlands is an outstanding school. Numbers are increasing because it has established an excellent reputation locally for the way it lives up to its motto of, 'Inspiring achievement, celebrating success.' Parents' and carers' responses to the inspection questionnaire were extremely positive, showing how much they value and appreciate what the school is doing for their children. 'It is a pleasure to see the happiness and confidence on pupils' faces every morning.' being a typical comment.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher was recognised during the previous inspection when leadership and management were judged to be outstanding. The strength of these aspects has been maintained as the headteacher continues to inspire staff. Together, they have further improved all other aspects of the school. Despite the difficulties of having three buildings on two sites, staff have created a wonderful atmosphere for learning. Parents comment that there is, 'lots of encouragement, great support' and 'effective strategies to make learning fun'. The school manages the significant mobility of pupils very well and has successfully integrated the small number of pupils from minority ethnic families. Those among them who speak English as an additional language are provided with the help they need in lessons and benefit from additional support from visiting language specialists each week. Staff work as one, their mission being to make a difference and help the school to overcome the daily challenges it faces.

Children enter the EYFS with skills well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils' progress and achievement are outstanding in Years 1 to 6. Leaders play a critical role in this exceptional performance. For example, the school has invested heavily in providing additional staff for the Reception and Year 1 classes. This strategy enables all pupils, but especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to continue to benefit from the close support of adults which they had in the EYFS. It also means that staff continue to provide learning experiences which closely meet pupils' needs and incorporate many aspects of the EYFS curriculum, for example, learning through play. As a result, there is now little difference between girls' and boys' performance, and attainment in Years 1 and 2 has improved markedly in recent years, particularly in reading and mathematics. The same improvement, however, is not as evident in writing.

More and more pupils are achieving expected standards by Year 6 in English and mathematics but relatively few are attaining above average standards, especially in English. The school has identified weaknesses in writing as the main reason for this. Nevertheless, by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, overall standards are average in English and mathematics. In science, the school has a history of above average standards and this reflects the excellent quality of teaching and learning in this subject.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and this is a credit to the dedication and commitment of all staff who ensure pupils have the key skills they need for a successful future. The school's contribution to community cohesion has always been a major strength ensuring pupils feel valued and fully included in all the school has to offer. The small but growing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds adds breadth to and enriches other pupils' cultural awareness and understanding. Behaviour is exemplary throughout. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and staff. There is a strong sense of pride and much of this stems from the way pupils' achievements both in school and within the community are recognised and celebrated. Staff and pupils look forward to the special celebration assembly every Friday

with an important guest from the community who presents the awards. Attendance is now average and this improvement reflects the effective strategies employed to reduce absence.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and is largely responsible for pupils' rapid progress and their excellent attitudes towards school. Teachers carefully plan to meet pupils' different needs. They make good use of the computers based in their classrooms to enhance pupils' learning. The very favourable ratio of adults to pupils in each class ensures those that need help receive it. Three quarters of the learning support staff are parents or former parents and their commitment to the school further strengthens the strong partnership with all parents. The excellent curriculum helps pupils to enjoy school enormously. There is a very relevant emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Art and design, design and technology and science are particularly strong features because of the high levels of teachers' expertise. The excellent learning opportunities provided in these subjects enable pupils to achieve high standards. A varied range of after-school clubs, visits, including a residential visit, and French lessons further enhance pupils' learning experiences. Pupils develop an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles and are keen to take part in competitions such as a local technology challenge which the school has won in four out of six attempts.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. All required checks and procedures to safeguard the pupils' health and well-being are in place. Strengths include the transition arrangements for children from Nursery to Reception and from Reception to Year 1: the highly effective roles developed for the school-based attendance officer and behaviour manager. In each class, charts record and celebrate pupils' 'good behaviour days' so that these can be rewarded. Careful assessments of pupils' progress enable teachers to quickly identify any pupils who are falling behind and support is soon implemented. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is another strength and enables these pupils to do exceptionally well. Individual support in the 'Star-time Den' and visits to a nearby special school contribute significantly to the progress of pupils with disabilities such as autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have challenging targets and are involved in assessing their own progress towards achieving these on the 'Reach for the sky' charts in classrooms.

The headteacher, staff and governors share a common vision and are keen to ensure that the school goes on improving. All have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The executive management team, supported by the senior leadership team and other key staff all do a superb job in identifying priorities, monitoring standards, achievement and the quality of teaching. Governance is good. Governors are able to offer a wealth of experience and expertise and are currently developing their role in helping the school to evaluate its effectiveness. The school provides outstanding value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter school with skills that are significantly lower than those typical for their age. Their speaking skills and social skills are very poor. The EYFS provision is well led and managed. All staff work effectively as a team to ensure individual children have the encouragement and attention they need to help them settle into school and enjoy the good range of exciting and challenging activities. Nursery children, for example, thoroughly enjoyed dressing up as witches and stirring the cauldron and those in Reception were excited about making cheese straws and the messy play with spaghetti worms in the water tray. By the end of the Reception, the good quality of teaching and learning ensures that most make good progress. However, only half

achieve expectations for their age. Children are extremely well cared for and well supported in their learning as there are high staffing levels in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff in all EYFS classes compensate very well for the limitations placed on them by the outdoor learning areas. Although the outdoor area for Reception children is very small, staff make good use of the space to promote learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	3
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	3
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	2
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 Woodlands Primary School, Doncaster, DN6 7RG

Thank you for your friendly welcome. You are right to be proud of your school and I can see why you enjoy every day so much. It is outstanding!

In the Nursery and Reception classes, your teachers and their helpers are working very hard to make sure you have lots of interesting things to enjoy both indoors and outside. The witches in the Nursery did a good job stirring the cauldron like Meg and Mog and I thought the messy play with spaghetti worms in Reception was a great idea.

It was good to see all of you in Years 1 to 6 getting on so well together. A new pupil told me that they had friends by the first playtime and that just shows how well you look after one another. I was impressed by your excellent behaviour in lessons and around school and by some of your interesting displays of work such as the Victorians in Year 6 and 'Meet the Vikings' in Year 4.

All of you concentrate so well and work very hard. Teachers and their assistants are certainly quick to help you if you need it. I was amazed at how many parents and people from your community who also want to come into school and help you to do well. I have asked your teachers to concentrate more on helping you to improve your writing skills, so expect much more writing in all your lessons and try extra hard to make it the best you can do.

It was a pleasure to meet your headteacher, all your teachers and their helpers. They are doing a great job planning such interesting and exciting things for you to do every day.

Congratulations to all for helping to make your school as brilliant as it is and for making my visit to your school one to remember.