

# Woodgrove Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135158
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	329041
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Taylor

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	442
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ros Newington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Homewood Avenue Sittingbourne ME10 1XN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 470862
<b>Fax number</b>	01795 477886

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This new, large school was established in September 2007 following the amalgamation of an infant and junior school. The majority of children are White British and few pupils learn English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception Year. A children's centre opened on site very recently, providing some additional services for families. The all year round childcare provision on site is run by a private provider, and includes a breakfast club and an after-school club.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Woodgrove Primary is a satisfactory school. It has a very welcoming and supportive ethos. It involves parents well in school and in their children's learning. Parents appreciate the good pastoral support, which they say ensures pupils are happy and well cared for. As one noted, 'Staff are so supportive to both parents and children.'

Although standards have been too low and remain below the national average, pupils' achievement is improving and is satisfactory. More pupils are on course to reach the expected standard by the end of this year than was the case in 2008. The school is taking a focused approach to addressing specific weaknesses, for example gaps in basic reading skills, pupils' knowledge of number and their skills in scientific enquiry. More 'catch-up' programmes and smaller teaching groups are targeted at raising standards, particularly at the top of the school where standards are lowest. Too few pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels. This is because more able pupils are not being identified and challenged consistently and not enough emphasis is placed on accelerating the progress of these pupils. Leaders recognise, and the school's data confirm, that throughout the school the overall standards that boys reach lag behind those of girls and remain too low. The school has begun to amend the curriculum to ensure that it addresses boys' interests more effectively.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. In Years 1 to 6, the satisfactory curriculum is increasingly being amended to meet pupils' academic needs and their interests. Staff training and mentoring has helped to improve teaching and learning, which are satisfactory, although a small residue of unsatisfactory lessons remain. There is also some good teaching. Relative strengths include teachers' subject knowledge, their organisational skills and relationships with pupils. Marking is regular and provides encouragement. In some classes, it provides good feedback about the precise strengths in pupils' work and what they need to learn next. However, this practice is not consistent. Therefore, opportunities to help pupils take greater ownership for improving their learning are missed. Newly established systems for regularly assessing pupils' attainments are helping to provide a clearer picture of the pupils' progress. Teachers are not using assessment data consistently to plan lessons for different abilities. Assessment is also not yet used well enough to make a clear distinction between pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who simply have gaps in learning, as a result of current or historic weaknesses in teaching and provision.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. Most enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Behaviour is satisfactory and improving. Older pupils told inspectors how much the improvements in behaviour have helped to make the school a safer place and lessons more productive and enjoyable. Pupils are keen to get involved, for example in the choir, community activities and after-school clubs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Training and mentoring have helped increase subject and middle leaders' skills, accountability and contribution to making improvements. Leaders regularly monitor teaching, learning and progress data. However, some evaluations lack the necessary rigour and precision about the impact of provision on improving pupils' learning and progress. This slows the pace of improvement and means that the capacity to improve currently remains satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory with emerging strengths in children's personal development and basic skills provision. Good induction arrangements help children to settle quickly and develop friendships, independence and good patterns of behaviour. Children clearly like school, and are keen to learn and to join in activities. Most are confident to talk about their learning and the choices they make. Good staffing levels help ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Children are encouraged to eat and drink healthily and to take regular exercise.

Satisfactory teaching and learning means that children make steady progress. A good balance of interesting indoor and outdoor activities are planned across the areas of learning. Planning is also becoming more flexible to enable staff to respond to children's interests and achievements on a day-to-day basis. Children make good progress in reading, speaking and listening and their personal development. This is because they are taught early reading and writing skills daily, and have regular opportunities to extend these basic skills through play. In addition, a good level of additional small group work extends children's speech and reading skills. Staff interact well with children during independent activities, which also helps to develop their speaking skills and move learning on. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily. External support is helping to guide improvements, including those to the outdoor facilities and learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, especially for boys and the more able pupils.
- Strengthen teaching and learning, especially the way staff identify and address the needs of different ability groups and guide pupils about how to improve their work and learning.
- Develop greater rigour in the way the school evaluates provision and its impact, so as to accelerate the pace of improvement and raise standards more quickly.

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 their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Although there is a wide spread of attainment on entry, children's skills and experiences are below those usually found, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in personal development and communication, language and literacy. Standards at the end of Reception are rising and are moving closer to, but remain below, those found nationally.

At the end of Year 2 in 2008, overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national average. At the end of Year 6 in the same year, the unvalidated results show that standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average. In this new school, the data available about trends in standards and progress over time is limited. However, the school's evidence clearly shows that at the point of amalgamation, standards, especially those reached at the end of Year 6, were too low, with significant underachievement. Therefore, with additional support from the local authority, senior leaders began the important process of raising standards.

Evidence from the school's current data, work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that pupils throughout Years 1 to 6 are making satisfactory progress overall. In some instances, for example in lessons where teaching is good, or when pupils are receiving good support through specific interventions, pupils have started to catch up on lost ground.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They develop good relationships with their classmates and cooperate well. In lessons and outdoors, pupils often behave well. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to mix with other age groups, take on responsibilities, develop independence and to extend their social skills. Pupils have a secure understanding of British culture. They have a relatively limited awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. They particularly enjoy the after-school clubs, sports and swimming. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning have improved and are satisfactory. There is some good teaching, but this is not yet consistent enough to raise standards more quickly. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and give clear explanations. They develop good relationships with pupils and provide encouragement. Teachers' questioning is often good, which gets pupils thinking. Occasionally, pupils are not given enough time to consider their response to questions or to answer fully. The large number of teaching assistants are skilled and proactive. They often provide good support for pupils' learning, especially for the lowest attaining pupils.

In some lessons, pupils concentrate and learn well because activities are challenging, engaging and well suited to their different abilities. Where learning is less effective, this is usually because activities are too difficult or too easy, or pupils are not given enough opportunity to contribute and work independently. The school has usefully introduced individual learning targets for pupils and opportunities for pupils to assess their own work in lessons. This practice is not a consistent feature in all classes. Teachers do not refer to pupils' targets often enough. Therefore, pupils are not always sure what they are assessing their progress against or working towards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Relative strengths in the satisfactory curriculum include provision for music and physical education, and after-school activities and visits that broaden pupils' horizons. The school's priorities rightly include extending information and communication technology resources and providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across different subjects.

The school has begun important work on developing a more creative curriculum that addresses pupils' interests more effectively, especially those of boys. It has rightly improved provision for developing the basic skills, for example by extending speech and language interventions, and introducing 'Reading Recovery' and 'Reading Partnerships'. These are helping to raise

standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 in particular. A wide range of interventions support the very large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there is little evaluation of the impact of this support on improving the progress of all these pupils and raising overall standards.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Good staffing levels, along with strong links with outside agencies, means pupils' personal needs are catered for effectively, including those pupils who need extra help. Good induction and transfer procedures help pupils to settle into school quickly and to transfer smoothly to secondary school. There are good procedures to follow up absences and improve the attendance of persistent absentees. Procedures for vetting staff and safeguarding learners meet government requirements. By setting up various workshops and family activities, the school is successfully involving more parents in their children's learning and in supporting the school. Academic guidance and support, although improving, are not as good as the pastoral support. Assessments are not used consistently to guide pupils towards improvements in their work and learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Senior leaders have been successful in bringing the two schools together, identifying the right priorities and beginning to make improvements. So far, the improvement is most evident in pupils' behaviour, in subject and middle leadership and in the development of basic skills. Monitoring and evaluation of provision is not yet rigorous enough. In part, this is because some of the lesson observations focus more on evaluating teachers' skills, rather than focusing on the precise impact that teaching has on the learning, progress and standards of the different ability groups. The relatively new governing body is supportive of the school. Its strategic role and that in challenging the school is developing. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has an inclusive ethos and works hard to reach out to the local community and families that would not otherwise become involved. The school has developed productive links with some of the local schools. Links with communities further afield are less well developed.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	3

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodgrove Primary School, Sittingbourne, ME10 1XN

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited you recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school. We think that your school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are improving and are satisfactory. Therefore, you are making satisfactory progress and standards have begun to improve.

It was good to see that the children in Reception are happy and settled. We found that you are all friendly and polite. We liked hearing about the activities that you enjoy. In lessons, we saw that you often listen well. We also noticed that you enjoy taking part in after-school activities, sports and swimming, and have some good opportunities to learn from visitors and trips. You also told us how much behaviour has improved. This is helped by each year group having separate playtimes. However, this does mean that different age groups do not get many chances to play together and older pupils do not have opportunities to help younger ones. Staff help you if you have a problem. They encourage you to develop good relationships and ensure that you understand how to keep fit and healthy.

We have asked your teachers to help you to make better progress and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science. We have asked them to do this by giving you more information about how you can improve your learning and to plan work that is better matched to the different ability groups in your classes. We have asked your headteacher and other leaders to regularly check how well the school is doing, so that it can improve more quickly. You can help by always doing your best.

Yours faithfully

Kathryn Taylor

Lead inspector