

Woodlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104190
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	336251
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Butt
Headteacher	Jane Arnstein
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2007
School address	Bloxwich Road North Willenhall WV12 5PR
Telephone number	01922 710613
Fax number	01922 496892
Email address	jarnstein@woodlands.walsall.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons involving the work of 18 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The inspector evaluated the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. One hundred and twelve parental questionnaires were analysed as well as those from school staff and the pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- how far improvements in teaching and learning enable pupils to make increased progress in writing and mathematics
- the degree to which assessment supports learning to give pupils sufficient opportunities to think, talk and write about their own achievement
- whether the newly formed senior leadership team has an accurate picture of the school's work and is effective in its work to bring about improvements the extent to which pupils develop a good understanding of the lives of people outside their home area, including overseas.

Information about the school

Woodlands Primary School is much larger than most primary schools. Nearly all of the pupils come from White British families. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The entitlement to free school meals is also average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the newly refurbished Nursery and Reception classrooms. Some of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend the after-school club associated with the school. This is managed privately and was not inspected.

There has been a significant change in staffing, including most of the senior leadership team, during the last year.

The school holds the Healthy School, Basic Skills Quality and Investors in People awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Woodlands Primary is a good school. It has made rapid improvements in the last year, especially to attainment, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. It has tackled effectively the staffing difficulties that affected progress and standards in 2008–9. Currently, pupils make good progress and reach above average levels in reading, mathematics and science. Attainment is not as high in writing, although positive moves have been made to tackle the shortfall and the quality of writing in pupils' books is much better in June than was expected earlier, given the standard last September. The new senior leadership team has settled quickly to bring a probing approach to their work. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses inside out and have already made considerable improvements to procedures to check pupils' progress, and set ambitious targets to ensure progress is accelerated. Woodlands has good capacity to maintain its rise.

Senior leaders and the governors recognise there are areas of the school's work that remain key priorities. Most of these centre on the creation of a curriculum that reflects leaders' aspirations in full. Cross-curricular links to support learning, in writing especially, the strengthening of partnerships with parents and others, the widening of pupils' involvement in different communities and the enhancement of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are the four strands for attention. They are judged satisfactory at present and, taken together are the reason why the curriculum is good rather than outstanding. For example, Early Years Foundation Stage indoor and outside provision is led too much by adults at present which reduces children's opportunities to explore and investigate the high quality resources independently.

Teaching is good overall and there are also examples of outstanding teaching. There is no longer any inadequate teaching. Lessons are enjoyed immensely by the pupils. For example, the mixed age Year 2–3 mathematics set urged each other to work determinedly to earn 'stars' that would help launch an astronaut. In so doing, they worked successfully to solve some quite complex multiplication and division problems. The lesson was vibrant and action-packed. Progress was outstanding and the pupils finished the lesson wanting to come back for more.

The school has a longstanding tradition of effective care, guidance and support. This was sustained through the difficult period last year. Staff do a particularly effective job in supporting pupils who may face barriers to learning and those who are vulnerable in any way. This shows through in pupils' progress records, with many making gains far in excess of what might be expected. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make good strides with their learning. Boys and girls achieve at similar rates and there is increased

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

challenge for the more able. Over half of the current Year 6 are working at the higher level in mathematics and reading, which is an excellent improvement over last year's figures.

□ Governors are at the centre of the school's work for improvement. They have good expertise in checking the data that show pupils' progress, and ensure all statutory requirements are met, especially for tackling discrimination and safeguarding all pupils. All members of staff, regardless of their role, have made a contribution to the school's recent development. Displays around the buildings celebrate the school's strengths and successes and show exactly what is expected by way of standards, attitudes, relationships and behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing so that attainment matches that in reading and mathematics.
- Strengthen the curriculum by:
 - ensuring children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have ample opportunities to explore, investigate and test all the new resources, indoors and out
 - developing cross-curricular links that help pupils consolidate and extend their writing and other key skills
 - building partnerships with parents, carers and others that draw on their talents and contribute to exciting learning
 - reaching out to communities in other parts of this country and overseas so that pupils make many new friends.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The published data for achievement in the year ending July 2009 showed a mixed picture of pupils' achievement. While results in English and mathematics were above average, pupils had not made enough progress because teaching had some serious shortcomings. These have been rectified this year. Inspectors' observations confirm that pupils' books are packed with good work that shows brisk progress in the development of core knowledge and skills. Only in writing is the picture less complete, although progress is gathering momentum and current writing is expressive, fluent, well presented and spelled correctly. The 'Big Question' books are an original way of capturing pupils' lively enquiry and reflection about matters that fascinate them. 'Do Hindus die?' is one such example.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They, too, want to find out about the things that surround them in their new classrooms and outside. Sometime this eagerness is not seized quickly enough by teachers and the work is too focused on adults' plans for the way lessons should develop. Otherwise, the children acquire the expected skills and knowledge, and an increasing proportion are reaching their targets. The increased number of children who attain beyond the usual

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

level is also rising gradually.

Behaviour is good. Around 15 per cent of pupils, and, separately, their parents and carers, have concerns about behaviour. There are a number of challenging pupils, particularly boys, and their moments of poor conduct stand out. What is also apparent is the effective way in which they are managed and the minimum disruption their outbursts cause in lessons. Woodlands is a settled school, where the pupils work productively and purposefully.

□ Pupils' appreciation of people's lives outside the local area is not fully developed. However, their spiritual, moral and social development is a strength. This term's focus on business and enterprise in Year 6 and the programme of work in other classes taught by next year's staff are examples of how well the school prepares pupils for their next steps in education and life outside school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

According to the pupils, lessons are fun times. They believe they are well taught and that they are making good progress because of this. They are not wrong. Pupils in Year

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

5 thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of converting 18 ounces to grams, which demanded great accuracy in the multiplication of decimals. In this session, the highest-attaining pupils were working at the level usually shown in the first year of secondary school. Lesson planning is well focused on the challenges for higher attainers and also the necessary support for pupils with learning difficulties. The teaching assistants provide expert aid for their groups, enabling them to work as successfully as their friends.

The use of assessment to support learning is good and there is informative and helpful discussion in lessons and in the marking in books about what has been achieved and what has still to be mastered. However, this approach is not consistent in all classes and subjects.. School leaders know this and are already working to spread the best practice across the school.

The curriculum presents pupils with a well-balanced range of study and good opportunities for their personal, social and health education. There has been considerable focus in the last year on the improvement of basic skills, which is proving successful. This has not been at the expense of learning in other subjects. However, the school has yet to tap fully the expertise of parents and carers and outside specialists in enriching the curriculum.

□ Most parents and carers show positive views about the welfare of their children in school. This is summed up in their comments and in their response to the final question on the questionnaire. It is evident that staff place the best interests of all pupils at the top of their priorities. Thus, care, guidance and support are effective in motivating pupils to good work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's high ambitions for its pupils stand out in the way it presents itself to visitors. High expectations, encouragement to do well and the indicators of personal success are represented clearly in display, in lessons, in discussion and in documents. Staff and governors confidently accept accountability for pupils' progress and attainment and constantly seek ways to improve. Because of the tribulations of 2008?9, the school has not advanced quite as rapidly on all fronts as it would have liked. Nevertheless, good inroads have been made into central priorities and attainment is now at the level it ought to be in reading and mathematics □ above average.

The improvement across the past year has been quite spirited. Much has been achieved

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and the school now provides an effective education. More time is required to ensure improvement is complete across the board. Writing and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are being improved but the final step to bring consistently good practice has still to be taken in these two key areas of learning.

□ Procedures to safeguard children are good because staff and governors anticipate potential hazards, are well trained and maintain a watchful eye on pupils' well-being. The promotion of equal opportunities has been improved steadily this year and is now good because pupils from all ability groups, for example, are making substantial progress. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory, but senior leaders know it could be better if there were stronger direct links between the pupils and others outside the local area. They also recognise that over the past year, the focus of improvement has been very firmly inside the school and that partnerships with those outside, including parents and carers, have not been as full as possible.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start levels of skill and knowledge below expectations for their age and make satisfactory progress through Reception and Nursery. Most reach their targets by the time they join Year 1. Their progress has accelerated since the opening of the new early years centre at the start of 2010. It is now possible for the two Reception classes to work more effectively together and to link in with Nursery activities when appropriate. Because the new accommodation has only been in use for a few months, staff have yet to develop the potential of the buildings, outside area and resources to provide exciting opportunities for children to follow their interests and enthusiasms and explore and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

investigate beyond the security of their own chair.

□ Leadership and management are good because the system of assessment is well established, accurate and used effectively to plan children's learning in all six areas. Leaders have also ensured a smooth transition to the new accommodation; they have gathered an impressive range of resources for the children to use and created a very attractive environment for their work. The children respond positively to what is on offer, as seen when Reception children celebrated the World Cup festivities by investigating the colour and numbering of team shirts and looked at artefacts from South Africa. They particularly enjoyed checking other children's passports.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers hold positive views of the school and are pleased they chose it. Concerns centre on the management of behaviour, including bullying, and their own role in supporting their children's education. Inspectors agree with parents that there are some challenging pupils but assure them that behaviour is well managed. Inspectors also agree that more can be done to build a partnership between school and home. School leaders are ready to put this in place. Every parent and carer thinks the school does a good job in preparing their children for the next stage of their education and nearly everyone says their children enjoy school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 415 pupils registered at the school.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodlands Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	56	45	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	63	38	34	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	37	55	49	13	12	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	46	54	48	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	46	55	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	39	57	51	10	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	40	64	57	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	38	59	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	46	55	49	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	37	49	44	11	10	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	33	59	53	9	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	44	39	61	54	7	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	54	46	41	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodlands Primary School, Willenhall, WV12 5PR

We want to thank you for your very warm welcome to Woodlands. We enjoyed visiting your school and finding out about the good things you share. Our report includes our judgements on the main things we found.

- When we came into your lessons we saw that you enjoy learning, work well for your teachers and that you are doing well in reading and mathematics.
- Your books showed us that you make good progress and that you take good care with your handwriting and spelling. We were impressed with your 'Big Question' books.
- In our talks together, you were polite, sensible and well behaved. You were keen to tell us how well your teachers look after you.
- When we walked around your school, we noticed how well the displays of your work show all the different things you learn and how well you are taught.
- Our talks with your teachers and school leaders showed us that everyone is working to improve your education and that they expect you to do your best.
- Everything we saw convinced us that Woodlands is a good school.

We talked to your headteacher and teachers about what could be made even better. There are the main things.

- You could be helped to improve your writing skills even more.
- Your learning could be made even more successful if:
- You could be helped to build better links with people in other countries.
- there were stronger links with your parents and carers
- the children in Nursery and Reception were encouraged to explore their new rooms and outside area more.

To help your teachers work on these things, you could talk to your parents and carers about how well your writing is developing. Then you could make some notes about this and share them with your teachers.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.