

Woodslee Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105007
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336403
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Dunne
Headteacher	Mrs A.J. Evans
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons, observing 11 teachers and all classes. They also held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Ninety one parental and 215 pupil questionnaires were scrutinised.

- the school's actions to improve attainment in mathematics
- the effectiveness of the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- how well focused and cohesive staff are in driving the school forward, in the light of recent changes in staffing.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with very few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average, but the number with statements is high, reflecting the school's Inclusion Base provision for children with autism. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above average. The school has the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards. The school has suffered from significant levels of long term staffing absence, outside of its control, over the last three years. It has also had to absorb high numbers of pupils due to the closure of two local primary schools.

There is an independently run breakfast and after-school club on site. This did not form part of the school inspection. A report of its effectiveness is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and a very large majority of parents and carers are supportive of its work. Recent challenges facing the school are being overcome and it has moved forward under the leadership and hard work of its headteacher, staff and governors, following a dip in standards since the last inspection.

Children get a satisfactory start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most of them enter the school with knowledge, understanding and skills that, whilst they vary each year, are broadly typical for their age. New staff and ways of working are becoming established and improvement is being driven forward, although assessment in the nursery remains underdeveloped. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is now broadly average. Previous weaknesses in mathematics and for boys have largely been overcome. Pupils' achievement, including for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Some teaching is good but, overall, the quality of teaching and use of assessment are satisfactory. There is not always a close enough match of activities to pupils' needs, especially for the more able, and independent learning is not encouraged sufficiently. Teachers are developing well the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils in their learning.

Most pupils enjoy their time in school and say that they feel safe and valued. The warm and positive atmosphere within the school is reflected in their good behaviour. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle. They take on satisfactory levels of responsibility within the school. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but their understanding of cultural difference is underdeveloped. The school recognises that whilst its promotion of community cohesion locally is developing well, it is underdeveloped at a national and global level.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses through its satisfactory self-evaluation but its analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils is too cumbersome. Leaders and managers have devised appropriate development plans for the future. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of learning and teaching, by:
 - - ensuring a better match of activities in lessons to pupils' needs, especially of the more able
 - - helping pupils to work more independently by giving them clearer guidance in

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lessons on how to move on to the next stage in their learning.

- Broaden pupils' understanding of and contact with the richness of the wider world.
- Develop more efficient analysis of pupil progress data by:
 - - improving the assessment of children's skills on entry to the Nursery
 - - gaining a clearer picture at senior leadership level of the progress made by different groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and make good progress as a result of the good teaching. Pupils work well collaboratively and respond well to the good range of activities provided for them that match their needs well. Learning is satisfactory in the majority of lessons, however, but improving well. As a result of more stable staffing and a programme of challenge and support led by the senior leadership team, attainment at the end of Year 6 has risen steadily since the drop in 2007. It is now broadly average across the school, although it is weaker at the higher levels in some year groups. The revised assessment system and lesson observations show that most pupils now make at least satisfactory progress, especially in mathematics. Gaps between boys' and girls' performance have considerably narrowed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have joined from other school closures make satisfactory progress. Pupils in the Inclusion Base often make good progress. As a result the majority of pupils across the school are on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set itself.

Most pupils say they feel safe and well looked after. They value the improvements brought about recently and, although a small minority expressed concerns about behaviour, inspection evidence showed this to be good. Pupils' good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle reflects the school's award. Many attend the breakfast and after-school club and enjoy the sporting opportunities, especially those provided by the school's links with the local football club. Pupils take some responsibility for the everyday running of the school, acting as playground buddies and through the school council, making a satisfactory contribution to the community. Variations in the quality of teaching across the school mean that pupils' skills to support their economic well-being are, as yet, satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is well covered through the social and emotional aspects of learning programme. Their links with the local community are satisfactory, although improving. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of the modern world is underdeveloped.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory across the school. There is some that is good. In the better lessons, good planning ensures that varied activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils, and good pace and challenge from the teacher stimulate their interest. Since the last inspection the school has developed good assessment practices in most areas and worked on involving pupils more in their own learning through personal targets. In the good lessons the results of this clearly inform teaching and help pupils to work independently of adult support. The majority of lessons lack this rigour. Activities are not as well matched to pupils' needs and there is often too much teacher direction.

Assessment guidelines are not used as effectively here to help pupils work independently and, as a result, there is a slowing of progress, especially for the more able. Marking is of variable quality but satisfactory overall. Much work has been undertaken since the last inspection in involving teaching assistants more effectively in learning, the results of which can be seen in the many and effective support groups that operate within the school.

The curriculum is well planned and the clear focus upon mathematics over the last two years has borne fruit in improved standards in many classes. The school is revising its provision for other subjects, adopting a more creative approach to make learning more meaningful and interesting to pupils. They recognise and value these changes. There is some focus upon international cultures through the arts and French and Spanish lessons, but pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world is otherwise more limited. The school has identified pupils with special talents and gifts and has begun a programme of additional provision for them. There is a developing range of enrichment

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activities that contribute to pupils' personal development.

The levels of pastoral care provided by the school are good and it works well with outside agencies to help ensure that vulnerable pupils' needs are well met, especially those in the Inclusion Base. Individual education plans are well tailored to their needs. The increased stability in staffing has meant a more consistent provision of much guidance, but the efforts put in by staff are not yet being matched by improvements in pupils' progress across all areas of the school. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are varied, being stronger in the move to secondary school. Efforts to improve attendance have been intensified over the last year, with weekly monitoring and rewards for improvements, but gains have yet to be seen. Guidance for the more able and those with special gifts and talents is in its early stages.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership has responded well to the challenges of recent years. It has stabilised staffing and begun to recover standards to the levels of the last inspection. Good assessment systems have begun to chart pupils' progress more accurately, although they are not yet used consistently by all staff to shape their teaching. There is a clear and coordinated drive towards improvement, helped by the recently introduced strategic improvement plan, shared with governors. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and developing well. The school has accurately identified the underachievement of individual pupils and put in place support but its strategies for monitoring the ongoing progress of groups of pupils are cumbersome and do not easily support the otherwise effective planning for improvement.

The school is inclusive and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Its promotion of equality of opportunity is improving as the school overcomes the legacy of the past lack of continuity in teaching and develops its provision for the more able. Good safeguarding procedures are in place and the school demonstrates good practice in its actions to help with site safety. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and is committed to the vision of the headteacher and senior leaders to recover standards. Satisfactory partnership working is beginning to help in this, especially through the good use of ICT to support learning. Engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory. The school is largely a harmonious community and has developed links with two European schools. It recognises that its actions to promote community cohesion are only

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satisfactory because pupils' understanding of the diversity of the modern world and their contact with it are underdeveloped.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle happily in the safe environment of the nursery as a result of the warm welcome they receive. They make satisfactory progress there, as a result of the satisfactory teaching, although their early writing skills are underdeveloped. Despite some outside support, assessment practices in the nursery are not yet sufficiently consistent to help clarify children's needs and inform planning. Progress accelerates rapidly in the Reception Year, however, so that by the time children enter Year 1 many reach and some exceed their early learning goals. In 2009 children reached consistently above average skill levels. This is because of the more secure assessment here and good quality teaching that combines a good range of activities that adults lead and ones that children choose themselves.

Resources are adequate. The school is aware that some are dated and that the outdoor learning areas are not developed well enough in order to extend children's learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers communicate regularly with parents and carers and are well aware of children's interests. Welfare provision and care is good, as is support for vulnerable learners. As a result children learn and play well together. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but improving strongly, with good plans in place to address the areas needing development and staff working increasingly effectively as a team.

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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	3

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who expressed their views are happy with most aspects of the school. A few expressed concerns over the quality of leadership and management, considered that they are not well informed about their children's progress, that the school does not take account of their views sufficiently well and that the school does not fully prepare their children for the future. Inspection evidence indicated that the school's provision in these respects is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodslee 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 19 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 335 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and most of you are clearly proud of it.

Woodslee Primary is a satisfactory school with some good features. The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help the school improve. You have a satisfactory start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and this continues throughout the school, so that you reach broadly average standards by the time you leave in Year 6. Attainment levels are rising because the teaching is making your lessons more interesting and you are beginning to learn more quickly.

Most of you say you feel safe, enjoy school and feel valued, as a result of how well you are looked after. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is broadly average. The teaching is satisfactory, with a good focus upon the important areas of English and mathematics. Your information and communication technology skills are developing well.

I have asked the school to consider the following things that will help it improve even more.

- Make sure that all your lessons are good.
- Help you to better understand the wider world and to increase your contact with it.
- For senior leaders to better use what they know about your progress and the standard of your work to help them plan improvements more effectively.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and by attending regularly. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

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