

# Wood Bank School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107590
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	336914
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rosemary Eaton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	56
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jayne Crane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Ingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Dene View Luddendenfoot Halifax HX2 6PB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 10 lessons and nine teachers or teaching assistants and held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at safeguarding and other policies, records of attendance and progress, samples of annual review reports, and the school's plans for its future development. The questionnaires from pupils and staff and the 24 returned by parents and carers were read and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well teachers use assessment information in order to meet pupils' diverse learning needs
- the rigour with which the school promotes attendance and the impact of this work
- how effectively leaders have managed recent significant changes in staffing, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness with which the school promotes pupils' communication skills.

## Information about the school

Currently, over 40 per cent of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The others have either severe learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Many have additional complex medical needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Around one-third of the pupils are of Pakistani heritage and speak English as an additional language. Most of the others are White British. Over half of the teachers joined the school during the current academic year. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award. At the time of the inspection, major construction work was taking place to increase the size of the building.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Exceptional', 'fantastic', and 'super' are some of the adjectives parents and carers use to describe this outstanding school. Pupils say that they like everything about it or smile to indicate that they agree with this sentiment. In their different ways, all groups of pupils make it clear that they feel totally safe, some explaining that this is because 'the grown-ups take care of us'. In fact, the school provides excellent care, guidance and support, paying the most meticulous attention to every aspect of pupils' health, safety and well-being. In turn, pupils show their care for others through the exceptional contribution they make to the school and wider community and by their extremely considerate behaviour. By demonstrating their enthusiasm for growing vegetables or their willingness to cooperate during therapy sessions, pupils reveal their determination to be as healthy as possible. The stimulating and highly relevant curriculum is tailored expertly to individual needs whilst embodying the school's unremitting and highly successful pursuit of equal opportunities for all. Frequent opportunities for learning at other schools, during visits, or when out and about in the locality extend pupils' experiences and knowledge of the world and support their first-rate spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

From their first days in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make outstanding progress, in line with the quality of teaching. Assessment information reveals that progress tends to be slowest in the strand of mathematics associated with number. On the other hand, achievement is particularly strong in learning to communicate. Exceptionally determined and informed leadership and governance have ensured that in this and many other aspects of its work, the school has built securely on its previously outstanding performance. Rigorous and extensive self-evaluation provides a highly accurate picture of particular strengths and where there is most scope for further development. These latter areas are tackled systematically and successfully. As a result, for example, the impact of the school's partnerships, including those with parents and carers, and of its work to promote community cohesion is impressively strong. The school provides outstanding value for money and there is overwhelming evidence of its excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' progress in number is as rapid as that in English and other aspects of mathematics by increasing the range of learning resources used.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

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Pupils display an extremely lively interest in learning and the world around them. The most vocal amongst them ask questions or comment when an item of someone's news has intrigued them. Others deliberate carefully when making choices, before going to great lengths to communicate their decisions, by pointing with their eyes, for instance. Pupils try hard to be as independent as possible and often persevere to complete tasks without being prompted. They listen very attentively to adults and to each other, appreciating that those who are struggling to communicate their ideas need extra time. The school's assessment information shows that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress overall from their individual starting points. For some, this means that they maintain their skills for as long as possible, despite their complex medical conditions. A number of pupils join lessons in mainstream schools because they have made such excellent progress in certain areas of learning. Pupils learning English as an additional language make progress at the same rate as other pupils. They benefit from the school's consistent focus on developing all pupils' communication skills and the work of bilingual teaching assistants. The proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress tends to be smaller in mathematics, particularly number, than in English and science. As far as possible, pupils learn to take some responsibility for their own safety. For example, they know that the reason they must wear a helmet when riding bikes in the playground is 'to protect our heads'. They are adamant that other children are kind to them. Their view that there is no nasty behaviour is entirely accurate; behaviour is exemplary at all times. Pupils are always keen to do jobs and help others. They serve from the fruit trolley, recycle, are members of the school council, train to be junior sports leaders, keep the classrooms running smoothly and improve the environment. Pupils were consulted about the facilities for wheelchair users in a local park, pronounced them not good enough and came up with ideas for improvement. The reason pupils are not prepared extremely well for leaving the school is that their attendance is affected significantly by absences related to their health, which is often fragile and necessitates, for example, periods spent in hospital. They learn about the variety of life and celebrate its richness, working and playing with different groups in other schools and the community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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

### How effective is the provision?

In each class, the teacher and teaching assistants work together closely, each fully aware of their own role in lessons and confident to step in and support each other when necessary. This means that activities flow smoothly from one to another and the time for learning is used to the full. Teachers' planning is based on continuous and precise assessments of what each pupil knows, understands and can do and sets out clearly what they are to gain from the lesson. Because they have an excellent understanding of the approaches that work best for pupils with particular needs, teachers modify activities expertly to ensure that all groups participate and progress as well as possible. Additionally, tasks are exciting and varied and motivate pupils to join in and sustain their efforts. Questions are used exceptionally well to encourage each pupil to think hard and communicate their ideas, using the methods that suit them best. Adults allow ample time for pupils to process information and make their responses, using their precise knowledge of each child in order to interpret the smallest movement or most indistinct sound.

Pupils have daily opportunities to practise the skills that are the focus for their very specific individual targets. Imaginative approaches mean that these sessions are just as much fun as the lessons where broader aspects of learning are linked together through themes. The school has identified the need to develop more of the resources that enable pupils to learn about number by using all their senses. All pupils have specialist teaching in music and dance, matched to their particular needs. Those with autistic spectrum disorders may have individual music lessons based on therapeutic principles. Dance for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties follows programmes to

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help them relax their muscles and extend their movements. Frequent visits and visitors to school, together with an after-school club enable pupils to apply skills in different contexts and have new experiences such as stroking a young lamb or trying their hand at circus skills. All pupils have links with at least one of 13 mainstream schools, on an individual basis, through joint projects or by sharing performances or lessons.

Extensive and hugely effective partnerships with parents and carers, professionals and agencies begin to be forged even before pupils join the school. All those involved with the child are brought together to provide the school with as much information as possible so plans can be made to meet their every need. Year on year, staff build up and share their knowledge, so each pupil is known exceptionally well as an individual. The arrangements to help pupils move on at the end of Year 6 are thoughtful, thorough and flexible, so any particular circumstances are taken into account. Children's personal care needs are met expertly and unobtrusively. The school ensures that the whereabouts of absent pupils are known and consistently reminds parents and carers about the importance of children attending whenever possible. Their natural concerns for their children's health are understood entirely but absences are questioned when they appear to be excessive.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders have achieved a striking degree of consistency in the quality of the school's work because staff appreciate and share their extremely high expectations. Monitoring arrangements are exceptionally thorough and rigorous. For example, observations of teaching lead to full evaluations which celebrate strengths and point out unequivocally aspects in need of further development. Targets are set to be achieved within a clear timescale and, crucially, leaders set out the support they will provide to enable staff to achieve these goals, for example, putting in place a coaching and mentoring team to establish the new teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is why the outstanding quality of teaching has been maintained despite so many staff changes. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's ethos. As soon as assessment information suggests there may be differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils, swift and effective action is taken. As a result, the progress made in science by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has accelerated and now matches that of other pupils. Superb partnerships and staff teamwork recently

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enabled the school to hold an enormously successful health and well-being week. This allowed pupils, staff and parents to benefit from a splendid variety of activities such as reflexology, dance, and gardening and receive advice about health-related topics. 'We feel valued and cared for,' commented a group of teachers. As part of its strenuous efforts to promote community cohesion, the school holds events beyond its locality, so as to reach parents who might otherwise feel isolated. Safeguarding is given the highest priority and is exemplary. For example, as the current building work progresses, risk assessments and procedures are amended on a daily basis as a result of monitoring by leaders, including the Chair of the Governing Body.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children's enjoyment is clear to see, whether exploring paint with their hands or examining resources and listening to seagulls' cries during a story about the seaside. Excellent planning and organisation ensures that they each make outstanding progress across all the areas of learning. For example, favourite toys are often placed deliberately just out of children's reach so they have to find an adult and communicate their intentions, rather than just playing in a solitary fashion. Children have excellent opportunities to make choices and learn in the fresh air, stimulated by the attractive resources set at different heights so they can be used by all children including those using wheelchairs or in standing frames. The Nursery and Reception classes share visits, for example, to an airport, providing stimulating and memorable experiences. The staff in each class have an extremely clear view of each child's achievements and what they



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need to learn next. 'Learning journeys' do much more than record experiences because they explain why something a child has done is significant and the implications for future planning. Each of the adults has key responsibility for particular children but a team approach is very evident, so children do not become reliant on any individual. Children who speak English as an additional language benefit greatly from the presence of bilingual teaching assistants, who also help to maintain excellent partnerships with parents and carers. The provision is currently overseen by the deputy headteacher. She ensures that children's welfare is always at the forefront of routines and activities. Children's outcomes, teaching, and learning opportunities are monitored with a high degree of rigour.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely happy with all aspects of the school. The inspection endorses their very positive views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wood Bank 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.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 56 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	71	7	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	63	8	33	1	4	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)	15	63	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	71	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	92	2	8	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

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



30 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Wood Bank School, Halifax, HX2 6PB

Thank you for all your help when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing your lessons and playtimes. It was great to see you wearing your World Cup shirts! You told us how much you like your school and we agree with you: it is outstanding.

Here are some of the best things about it:

- you all make excellent progress because you have such marvellous teaching
- you always feel safe in school because the grown-ups look after you so carefully
- your behaviour is outstanding and you do a great deal to help other people
- you have lots of exciting activities in lessons and when you go on visits
- the school is brilliant at working with other schools and people with special skills who can help you to learn and stay safe and healthy
- the school's leaders do a super job of running the school and they are always finding ways to make it even better.

We have asked the school to do one more thing. You don't always get on quite as well in number as in the other things you learn. We want the school to find ways to help you all learn a bit faster about number. You can all help by trying as hard as you can – just as you always do.

We send each one of you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Eaton

Lead Inspector

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