

Woodham Ley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114795
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338447
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mills
Headteacher	David Walton
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and observed the school's work. They looked at work in pupils' books, reports from advisers working at the school, the school's assessment and progress tracking data, and the school's improvement plans. In addition inspectors analysed at 42 questionnaires completed by parents.

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

- pupils' attainment and their progress through the school, particularly in English
- how successfully the school has improved the quality of teaching and the school's capacity for sustained improvement
- how well pupils' progress is tracked and assessment information used to match work to the needs of all pupils.

Information about the school

Woodham Ley Primary School is smaller than the average primary. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and most of these pupils have difficulty with basic literacy and numeracy. There have been several changes of leadership very recently. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher had been at the school for one week.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. The school is ineffective because attainment in English is low and pupils' learning and progress in English are inadequate.

Children join the school with a range of skills and capabilities that are generally typical for their age, although they are weaker in communication, language and literacy. They make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are generally working at average levels by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and their attainment in assessments at the end of Year 2 is in line with what is expected for their age. Although pupils continue to make broadly satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics and science, learning and progress are inadequate in English. The results of national tests in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are close to average. However, those in English have been significantly below the national figure over recent years. Teaching is inadequate because in Years 3 to 6 it does not enable pupils to make sufficiently rapid gains in their learning. Expectations are not always high enough and work is not well matched to pupils' needs. When teachers mark pupils' work in English and mathematics, they do not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. The quality of target setting is too uneven. Although some pupils know their targets, some do not.

Pupils like coming to school, as parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire confirm. Attendance is average. One pupil commented, 'There's always something new to do.' The sound care, guidance and support the pupils receive and their generally satisfactory personal development are stronger aspects of the school's work.

Relationships are positive and friendly. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. However, pupils' low attainment in English basic skills means that they are inadequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management are inadequate because leaders, managers and governors have been unsuccessful in tackling the weaknesses contributing to pupils' underachievement. The analysis of assessments by the school's leadership team has not always been accurate enough to ensure that the key reasons behind pupils' low attainment and lack of progress are identified and successfully tackled. Leaders and governors have not identified specific priorities for development and swiftly addressed them in order to secure the necessary improvements. Self-evaluation has not always given the school an accurate picture of its performance. Monitoring of classroom

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practice and of pupils' work has not led to action that has ensured that sustained improvements are made in outcomes for pupils. Although the school has systems to check how well pupils are doing, pupils' progress has not been effectively tracked, because of past inaccuracies in teachers' measurement of pupils' attainment. Information from assessments has not been used sufficiently to identify pupils who are falling behind and to plan appropriately challenging work that meets the needs of all pupils. As a result, they are not meeting their targets. Consequently, the school has not secured the necessary improvements and the capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase rates of learning and progress in English, by:
 - making sure that teachers understand the pace, challenge and expectation required to ensure that all pupils make swift gains in their learning
 - using information gained from tracking pupils' progress and from marking to match work consistently to pupils' needs
 - ensuring pupils know their targets and how to improve their work
 - sharpening the skills of leaders and managers at all levels in identifying priorities for development
 - increasing the rigour with which leaders and managers monitor the school's performance in order to take action that will bring about sustainable improvements to the quality of provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Rates of learning and progress are not consistent enough through the school and across subjects to ensure that pupils attain the standards expected by the end of Year 6. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is too slow and pupils' attainment in English is low. All groups of pupils make similar progress. This is why pupils' overall achievement and enjoyment of their learning is inadequate. The pace was slow in English lessons when the work pupils were given was not suitably challenging and when all were expected to do very similar tasks despite the range of ability in the class. Those pupils with special educational needs have not been consistently well supported to ensure they keep up and as a result many of them have not made the progress of which they are capable.

Pupils have a sound knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and are confident that adults will help them should any problems occur. They enjoy opportunities to take on responsibility in school, for example as prefects awarding class points for good behaviour and as play leaders at break time. The school council enthusiastically suggests themes for enrichment weeks and organises charity fundraising. Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy is satisfactory. They particularly enjoyed the themed week during which they made salads, smoothies and scones. Pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is satisfactory. The

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school has links with the local church and the choir sings for local elderly residents. Older pupils have enjoyed writing to pen friends in Africa as part of a project establishing links with a school in Uganda and this gives them some understanding of how children live in other parts of the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Friendly relationships between adults and pupils create a calm climate for learning and help lessons to proceed smoothly. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of, particularly in English, are not always high enough. Information from assessment is not used systematically to plan further learning and set tasks appropriately matched to all pupils' needs. This means that time is sometimes wasted. For example, pupils who find learning easy are required to wait while teachers explain learning to others who need more support, or while the rest of their classmates finish their tasks. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups and this promotes their personal and social skills well. Marking and target setting do not always make clear to pupils what the next steps are in their learning. As a result, pupils do not make swift

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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gains in basic literacy skills and do not reach their potential.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. Literacy and numeracy are rightly prioritised. A specialist sports coach and extra-curricular clubs support pupils' positive attitudes to leading healthy lives. Music is a highlight. All pupils in Year 3 learn to play the recorder and in Years 4 to 6, pupils learn the guitar. Pupils in Year 6 speak enthusiastically about the annual residential visit to an activity centre. However, planning does not always ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 steadily acquire the necessary literary skills to attain as well as they can. For example, opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills through regular practice in writing at length in a range of different styles are limited.

Pastoral support is satisfactory and contributes to pupils' self-assurance and security. Links with a range of outside agencies are used well to support vulnerable pupils. Satisfactory transition arrangements help pupils when they transfer to secondary school, particularly those who may need additional guidance and support. Appropriate systems are in place to encourage regular attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
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 school has not succeeded in embedding ambition and driving improvements effectively in order to accelerate pupils' learning and progress. Some recent initiatives, such as more systematic teaching of spelling, have not been in place long enough to show their impact on improving pupils' writing skills. Priorities for development are not always clear enough to enable weaknesses to be tackled as quickly as they should be. Systems for monitoring teaching and pupils' learning and progress are not effective in leading to action that brings about rapid and lasting improvements. Leaders and governors have ensured that procedures to promote pupils' safety, welfare and health are sound. The governing body has not challenged the school robustly enough to enable the school to tackle weaknesses decisively. It has had too little impact on the direction and work of the school. A lack of rigour in reports to governors has contributed to their inaccurate view of pupils' progress and the quality of provision. The underachievement highlighted by the 2009 results came as a shock. The school's promotion of equality and tackling of discrimination is inadequate because there is not enough improvement in the outcomes of all groups of pupils. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Pupils have a sound understanding of the local community. The school has plans to develop pupils' awareness of those who live in communities other than their own.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Caring support and happy working relationships help children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. Well-established routines develop children's independence and sense of responsibility. For example, in Nursery children take turns to make a record of the snacks that each child eats and in Reception, children take responsibility for tidying away equipment at the end of activities. There is an appropriate balance between adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to select activities for themselves. Literacy skills are given a strong emphasis through regular teaching of letters and sounds in small groups. Records of regular observations are kept, but procedures are inconsistent between Nursery and Reception and this information is not always used to plan the next steps in children's learning to improve progress further. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at the school. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are confident that their child enjoys school and that the school keeps their child safe. A small minority expressed concern about the management of behaviour and another small minority were concerned about the progress their children are making. While inspectors judged behaviour to be satisfactory, inspectors found that too many pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not making the progress that they should in their learning, particularly in literacy.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodham Ley 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	45	21	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	45	23	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	26	26	62	5	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	24	21	50	8	19	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	9	21	29	69	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	21	27	64	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	24	29	69	3	7	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)	8	19	21	50	5	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	17	27	64	4	10	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	12	25	60	8	19	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	19	23	55	4	10	4	10
The school is led and managed effectively	6	14	25	60	3	7	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	33	23	55	3	7	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



13 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodham Ley Primary School, South Benfleet, SS7 4DN

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to all that you had to say. I am writing to tell you about the judgements we reached.

We found that your school does some things satisfactorily but it has areas that need to be improved. It is not giving you a satisfactory education, because you are not making as much progress as you could. This means that you are not reaching high enough standards in English by the time you leave the school. We have judged that the school needs 'special measures'. This means that it will receive extra support over the next two years. This will involve people from outside the school as well as hard work from you and your teachers.

The best things about your school are:

- you told us you like your school and you get on with each other and the adults
- you know how important it is to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy
- you enjoy the clubs that the school organises, like learning French and learning to play musical instruments in Years 3 to 6
- the school works hard to make sure everyone is cared for and safe.

We would like you to do better, particularly in English. We have asked the school to make sure that you all make good progress in lessons. We have also asked the teachers to give you work that is at the right level of difficulty for each one of you. You can all help by telling your teachers if the work is too easy or too difficult. We would also like the teachers to make sure that when they mark your work, they give you clear ideas about how you can make it even better.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for your help and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector

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