

Woodcroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134677
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	341495
Inspection dates	30 November –1 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Court
Headteacher	Craig Tallon
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information, safeguarding procedures and samples of pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 98 from parents.

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

- How well teaching meets pupils' differing needs to ensure that progress is consistent across the school.
- How well the school supports newly arrived pupils and those in the early stages of learning English.
- How effectively leaders at all levels are working together to evaluate provision and to identify and improve areas of weakness.
- How much pupils enjoy school and get on together.

Information about the school

The majority of pupils come to this large urban school from the surrounding community. The school takes pupils from many different backgrounds; about a quarter are from families of refugees and 56% of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the number eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in an Early Years Unit that includes a Nursery and two Reception classes.

The headteacher took up post in September 2009. He was previously the school's deputy headteacher.

Amongst its many awards the school has an Activemark for its work in physical education as well as Healthy School accreditation.

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

This is a good school that successfully meets the needs of its diverse community. Members of staff rightly place a high priority on ensuring that pupils enjoy school. The great success of this is shown in the smiling faces that can be seen throughout the day and in the calm and harmonious atmosphere in lessons and at playtimes.

Pupils' achievement is good because they are taught well for much of the time. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Unit (the Nursery and Reception classes), where their differing needs are supported well. This good progress is maintained in the rest of the school, and attainment is close to national averages by the end of Year 6.

Attainment improved in national tests in 2009, although mathematics still lags behind other subjects. In mathematics, pupils do not get frequent enough opportunities to practise and develop their problem solving and investigational skills in numeracy lessons as well as in other subjects. This slows the pace at which these skills improve.

Pupils behave well and are proud of their school. They get on together and support each other thoughtfully both in and out of lessons; as one wrote, 'Our school is fabulous because we care about each other.' Healthy lifestyles are promoted particularly effectively as demonstrated by the school's success in gaining Activemark and Healthy School awards. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating a balanced diet and many choose from the 'salad bar' at lunchtime. They participate keenly in sport and are very keen to take exercise.

Newly arrived pupils are welcomed with open arms by adults and pupils and they settle quickly. There are good arrangements to support pupils in the early stages of learning English and they make good progress.

Teachers are hard-working and do their best to make learning fun, making good use of resources to bring subjects alive. In the best lessons, time is used well and there is a good pace to learning with all pupils being challenged at the right level. Throughout the school, teachers plan carefully for lessons. However, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is because work has not been pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially the most able, and too much time is spent sitting on the carpet at the start of the lesson. This means that progress is not yet even across the school, although leaders are doing the right things to iron out these remaining inconsistencies.

The school continues to move forward quickly and is demonstrating, in the way that it is raising attainment and has tackled weaknesses from the last inspection, that it has a good capacity for further improvement. The new headteacher has brought fresh ideas to the school and there is a strong drive for further improvement. There are good systems for evaluating school effectiveness and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Such

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pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are given good quality support in and out of lessons, helping them to progress well.

The school works extremely well in partnership with others to promote pupils' learning and well-being. There are very close links with other schools, as well as a very beneficial sports partnership. Pupils speak very positively about the 'Rock Challenge 2009', organised through this partnership, where they worked together to write, choreograph and stage their own dance performance at a local theatre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the remaining satisfactory teaching to good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers always provide the right levels of challenge for all pupils, especially the most able
 - ensuring that pupils do not sit on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons.
- Improve attainment in mathematics by giving pupils more opportunities to practise and improve their problem solving and investigation skills in numeracy lessons and in other subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good. The majority of pupils have good attitudes towards learning and they work hard most of the time, although just occasionally off-task behaviour slows the pace of learning in a very small number of lessons. Nevertheless, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in the majority of lessons. This was seen to good effect in a religious education lesson where pupils developed a very good understanding of parables in The Bible because of the teacher's skill in drawing out similarities and differences between different faiths. Pupils make excellent progress in Year 6 literacy lessons because teachers are very skilled at making activities purposeful; for example, when learning about how to improve story endings the writing task was fun and engaging for boys and girls as it was based on the theme of 'spooky tales'. In lessons where progress is no better than satisfactory, the pace of learning is slowed because work is not pitched at the right level for all; for example, a group of pupils who were learning about fractions struggled because too many concepts were introduced at once. The broadly average attainment seen in national assessments at the end of Year 6 is also evident in most of the pupils' current work. In lessons, there are no significant differences between the progress of different groups, with all doing equally well from their varying starting points.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave sensibly most of the time and show good concern for the needs of others. They are very confident that any worries or concerns will be dealt with quickly by staff. This means that they feel safe at school although there is some concern about the lack of space on the very cramped playgrounds. Pupils make a good contribution to the community by taking part in local events and working very closely with other schools and groups. They

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are keen to take on responsibilities. Peer mediators and play leaders carry out their roles very sensibly and the school council gives pupils a good voice in the life of the school, for example by helping to purchase games for wet playtimes.

Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life. Rates of attendance have been improving and are now broadly average. Pupils develop satisfactory basic skills as well as good confidence and self-esteem.

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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

The school provides good care and support to pupils. Adults regularly go the extra mile for their pupils, devoting much time to making school a happy and safe place to be. The school is very imaginative in finding solutions to problems. For example, staff noticed that Year 6 pupils were getting anxious about their transfer to secondary school and so the school bought in counselling support to help to overcome these worries. A breakfast club gives a good start to the day for a good number of pupils. Well-managed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that their needs are met well, especially when they are working in small groups outside lessons.

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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Good teaching means that there is a good pace to learning in many lessons. Pupils are grouped by ability in Years 5 and 6 for numeracy and literacy lessons and this helps to ensure that learning is almost always good at these times. Throughout the school, teachers respond very well to pupils' different backgrounds when planning work, for example by ensuring that those who are in the early stages of learning English have a friend to turn to if they do not understand something. Teachers are becoming increasingly sharp at using assessment information on pupils' learning to plan what to teach next, although this is not yet consistently good in all lessons. Most pupils know how improve their work because teachers are becoming more adept at using marking and target setting to show them the next stage in their learning.

The curriculum is enriched very effectively through an exciting range of visits and visitors, as well as a good number of clubs. Sports activities such as a cheerleading group contribute well to the pupils' knowledge of the importance of exercise and to their enjoyment of school. The school has made a good start to making learning more purposeful by linking subjects together and its good practice in this area has been recognised by the local authority. Nevertheless, leaders know that there are still too few opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their mathematical skills in lessons. Creativity is fostered very successfully. The school has an Artsmark and the high quality artwork on display around school demonstrates the pupils' very good skills in this area of the curriculum.

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 new leadership team is having a good effect on the work of the school. They are strongly committed to providing high quality care and support for children and their families and this is reflected in every part of the school's work. Their drive for improvement and their ambitions for what sort of school they want in the future are shared by all staff and governors and there is a good understanding of remaining priorities.

The headteacher is working hard to strengthen the involvement of other leaders in monitoring provision. Subject leaders are becomingly increasingly proactive in tackling weaknesses, although some have not yet had enough opportunities to visit lessons so that they can check things for themselves. Governors are supportive. They have successfully planned for significant improvements to the school environment and are

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now doing more to find things out for themselves so that they can begin to take a greater role in strategic planning.

The school engages well with parents and carers and promotes equality successfully. Leaders have very successfully broken down many of the barriers between home and school and have good plans to extend this further once building work is complete. Leaders are doing the right things to ensure that all pupils do equally well in all lessons. Discrimination is tackled very vigorously and this means that pupils quickly learn to respect different beliefs. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Leaders are very responsive to local needs. Pupils develop a good understanding of life in other parts of the world and there are strong links with a school in Nepal. Leaders are now looking at how they can develop links with a school in a different part of the United Kingdom to strengthen provision in this area even further.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Since taking up post the headteacher has been very diligent in updating records so that statutory requirements are met. This is now the case, and leaders are now working to ensure that all members of staff have been able to access all of the required training so that they are all up to date with latest guidance.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start school in the Nursery most are working at levels well below those typically expected for their age, with language and counting skills especially weak. Children make good progress from these very low starting points. Attainment improves

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throughout the Nursery and Reception classes and rises to below average levels by start of Year 1. Children do well because teaching is good and there is a rich and varied curriculum which makes very good use of a large and well-resourced outdoor area. Children are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Those who are in the early stages of learning English are given good support and questioning is used well to ensure that they quickly learn new vocabulary. For example, when making Christmas tree biscuits, the adult working with the children was very diligent in checking that they used the correct words for the ingredients and understood all of the instructions. In the Reception classes, letters and sounds are taught well using songs and actions and this helps children to make a good start to developing early reading skills. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well and as a result, they learn to share and develop good independence. They are given good opportunities to try out their own ideas such as building an adventure trail using bricks and blocks so that they can improve their balancing skills. Children are given many opportunities to choose where they are going to work. Learning at these times is most effective when adults intervene at exactly the right time to move learning on. At the moment, this is stronger with children in the Nursery than in the Reception classes.

Good leadership and management ensure that provision is reviewed regularly and action taken as needed to ensure improvement. Leaders are now rightly working to improve children's calculation skills by ensuring that opportunities to count are built into learning throughout the school day.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are pleased with the school and the way it supports their children. Their views are typically summed up in comments such as, 'I would highly recommend this school to any parent' and 'The school has a good sense of community and members of staff are always willing to help.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

The inspection team received 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 414 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	68	31	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	62	36	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	56	42	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	51	42	43	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	54	40	41	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	44	49	50	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	47	47	48	1	1	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	43	44	45	1	1	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	43	47	48	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	50	43	44	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	36	54	55	4	4	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	54	55	36	37	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	59	34	35	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 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.



2 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Woodcroft Primary School, HA8 0QF

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you. The comments that you made in the pupils' questionnaire were very helpful and we agree with you that your school is good and that you learn new things quickly.

Some of the things we found out about your school:

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes settle very quickly and make good progress. There are lots of exciting things to do outside and you work together very happily.
- In Years 1 to 6 there is lots of good teaching and this helps you to make good progress most of the time.
- You really enjoy school because adults make learning exciting by planning many fun activities both in and out of lessons. You have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy.
- You behave well and play together happily. It is great that you are so helpful to new pupils when they arrive during the year.
- Your teachers and other adults are very kind and caring and they give you good help when you are struggling with your work.
- The school is well led and managed and all the adults are working very hard to make the school even better.
- Virtually all of your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that teachers always plan work that is not too hard or too easy for you, and do not expect you to sit for too long at the start of lessons.
- Give you more opportunities to use your numeracy skills, especially problem solving, in different lessons.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. You can help your teachers by continuing to try hard in lessons and always behaving well.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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