

Woodland Community Primary School

Heathgate, Birch Green, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6QH

Inspection dates

17–18 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide firm and determined leadership. This values individuals and ensures that all are helped to succeed.
- Expectations in the school are high. Staff are committed to pupils who, in return, try hard and behave very well. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour during the inspection.
- Relationships in the school are very positive. Pupils and parents trust staff. This builds pupils' confidence and contributes to parents' strong support of the school.
- Leaders and teachers are reflective about their work. Where they identify that any aspect is not as effective as possible, they are willing to review the school's approaches. Some changes in the school are recent and have not yet had full impact.
- Effective teaching leads to pupils' good progress over time. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to extend pupils' learning as much as possible.
- Children start the school in the early years with development which is frequently less than typical of children of their age. They learn well but some still need to catch up in key stage 1. By the time they leave the key stage 2, pupils' attainment is average overall.
- Pupils are happy, polite and very welcoming to visitors. They respect the adults they work with.
- The attendance of all groups of pupils at least matches the national average and is increasing.
- The curriculum is well balanced across all subjects. Pupils take part in, and enjoy, a wide range of other activities. Some of these also benefit members of the wider community.
- The early years provision helps pupils to make a rapid start to their learning in school. It is well led and teamwork is good. Resources are well used, although the outdoor areas could provide even better opportunities for learning.
- Governors are committed to the school. However, their challenge has not helped leaders to secure the fastest possible progress from their starting points for all groups of pupils. In addition, the school website lacks essential details.
- Pupils are safe in school. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are highly aware about the risks pupils may face. They recently received training about particular issues such as internet safety and radicalisation.
- Leaders' support to other schools is effective and highly regarded. It brings benefits back into the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that outcomes for different groups of pupils improve by:
 - leaders sharply focusing on pupils' progress from their different starting points so that expectations are raised further and more pupils make progress at a faster rate than expected nationally in English, mathematics and other subjects
 - teachers using information from their assessment of pupils' learning to adjust classroom activities so that gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils close
 - governors more acutely challenging school leaders about pupils' progress over time.
- Governors must ensure that the school website provides all the required information so that parents and others have quick and easy access to the details they may require.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders are determined that every child in the school will be well looked after and able to learn the information and skills they need. Leaders emphasise academic success but recognise that the development of pupils' wider skills is equally important and, for some pupils, is the key to their learning in school subjects. The school puts a very high value on people, whether these are pupils, members of staff or others working in the school. The strong sense of caring is tangible. Staff commitment and morale are very high.
- Leaders set high expectations of themselves, other staff and pupils. These contribute to adults working hard for the benefit of pupils and pupils trying their best in their learning and behaviour. There is a culture of celebration in the school. Lively displays, including artwork and photographs capturing pupils' success, cover corridor walls.
- School systems are well organised. Staff are clear about their roles, which means that pupils and parents know who to talk to about particular points or questions. Leaders gather information about many aspects of pupils' work. They use this to inform their self-evaluation and planning for improvement. However, leaders have not focused sufficiently on groups of pupils' starting points, which has led to the school's evaluation being overgenerous. When leaders recognise that an aspect of the school could be improved, they put new approaches in place. For example, they have recently changed the way lessons in reading, writing and mathematics are planned and have adopted a new scheme for teaching reading. Some of these changes are at a relatively early stage. It is already clear that such changes are leading to improvement, but this is not yet complete.
- The headteacher and other members of staff provide highly effective support to other schools. The positive impact of this work is recognised by the local authority. While the headteacher is sometimes required to be out of school, other senior leaders are well equipped to take any necessary decisions and ensure that the school continuously offers pupils good-quality provision. Leaders make sure that, when they are supporting other schools, they also identify examples of effective practice which they can then consider for Woodland.
- The parents who talked with inspectors were very complimentary about the school. They recognise the range of different opportunities it offers to meet the needs of pupils with different interests, skills and talents.
- The curriculum provides a good balance between key subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics and other subjects, such as physical education (PE), science and Spanish. The sporting abilities of pupils are growing. This is, in part, a result of the effective teaching of PE but also reflects the school's appropriate use of the additional sports premium funding. Opportunities for pupils are increasingly being offered outside the normal school day. One recent example can be seen in the growing success of the school's running club. This has developed from the school's routine work to become a weekend activity for pupils and the wider community. Pupils involved have developed their wider confidence and motivation, and have gained considerable success in county competitions. Pupils are keen to be involved in, and enjoy, the wide range of after-school clubs offered.

- The school community is welcoming and tolerant. Its very positive ethos supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in their different lessons. In addition, there are well-planned opportunities to extend this further. During the second day of the inspection, staff skilfully linked the theme of 'Children in Need' to formal and informal learning. When talking to an inspector about the work they were doing, Year 5 pupils were just as ready to discuss how they were using rhetorical questions as why it is really important to think about and support people who are less fortunate than them. The school's work to develop the values pupils need for their future success and happiness is highly effective.

Governance of the school

- Governors are dedicated in their work and are determined that the school should provide the best possible education for its pupils.
- Governors' skills and experience are well matched to the needs of the school. The governing body is well informed about key aspects of the school. While governors sometimes use this information to challenge leaders, this is not always clear from the records of governing body meetings. Governors' challenge has not ensured that different groups of pupils make the fastest possible progress.
- Governors are appropriately involved in the systems for linking teachers' pay and performance. A group of governors considers detailed information from the school's appraisal system before confirming that any pay increases should happen. Teachers and other members of staff value the way that the appraisal system helps leaders to identify suitable training to enhance individuals' skills.
- Governors have ensured that the school is in a secure financial position. The additional sports premium funding has been used well to extend pupils' experience and support staff development. Governors are clear about their strategy for using the pupil premium funding. Much of this funding is used to employ additional staff to reduce class size. This has contributed to disadvantaged pupils making progress at similar rates to others although disadvantaged pupils' attainment remains generally lower than that of other pupils.
- Governors have not ensured that the school's website meets requirements. While much of the necessary information is included, some of this has not been updated for this school year. In addition, some documents which must now be published are not included.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is kept up to date, most recently at the start of this school year. It is based on the local authority's model policy. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding. This includes annual updates which allow teachers and other staff to know what is required. In addition, leaders ensure that all staff receive specific training on matters such as the risks posed by people with extreme views or safety concerns which could affect pupils when using computers. This work also includes pupils directly; for example, recent presentations by an outside organisation about the impact of domestic violence increased staff awareness and led to a number of pupils seeking further help and advice.

- Teachers know the pupils very well. Staff are acutely aware of the potential vulnerabilities of some pupils and monitor them carefully so that they can respond to any difficulties or concerns at the earliest possible stage.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- School leaders have recently introduced new approaches to teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff use these consistently, which helps pupils to successfully make good progress. Pupils learn well, whether they are being taught by teachers or by teaching assistants. Pupils also develop the skills they need to learn effectively when they are working independently.
- Staff expectations are very high. Learning is well planned and pupils are kept busy. No learning time is wasted. Pupils move swiftly between different activities. They enjoy the activities that teachers set for them.
- The high-quality relationships between pupils and staff, and between pupils themselves, mean that pupils have confidence to try out ideas in class discussions even if this means making a mistake. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to turn any such mistakes into learning points. Their use of questions to challenge pupils is effective.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning frequently during each lesson. This allows them to make sure that their plans for the next day's learning build up pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, opportunities to record this ongoing assessment are sometimes missed. This, in turn, makes it harder for teachers to be absolutely certain that they are stretching pupils, and particularly the most able, to extend their learning.
- Senior leaders closely monitor teachers' work through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' books. Their findings are closely tied to the demanding targets the school sets for its teachers. This process ensures that leaders know how effective teachers are. It allows them to offer help and support if this is required.
- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of reading has improved since the previous inspection. This was in response to their concerns that pupils were not reading well enough. There is now a clear culture of reading in the school. A new scheme for teaching phonics and linking this directly to reading and, for younger pupils, writing has been put in place. Pupils at different stages of learning to read were confident to read to inspectors and to use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. Reading is encouraged by pupils being awarded a new book to keep after they have read 60 other books. This is particularly effective for the most able readers, who are encouraged to broaden their reading by quickly experiencing a wide range of different books. A new library was established earlier this term in conjunction with improvements to the school's computer facilities. The library is already well used and encourages pupils to enjoy reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- The school's positive and child-centred culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils and their circumstances are very well known to staff. This allows the school to provide closely tailored support to pupils and so help them to be ready to learn.
- The pupils who talked with inspectors said there is little or no bullying in the school. They trust teachers to take prompt action if they have any concerns. Pupils show maturity and also recognise that they have responsibility for others; an older pupil told an inspector that if conflict between pupils arises, they are trained to help, 'like politicians but in a school'. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- The work of the learning mentor and wider pastoral team is highly regarded by parents. While focusing on pupils, this team also provides effective support to families. This has had clear impact, for example in ensuring that pupils with previously high absence now attend school regularly.
- Leaders provide information and training for parents and staff about important risks which could affect pupils. This has included informative sessions about, for example, what to do to keep pupils safe when they are accessing the internet, whether at home or in school.
- The school has an open and inclusive approach concerning the differences between people. This develops pupils' active respect for others. They recently learned about a particular disability affecting one of their peers. Pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities are supported very well. This helps them to learn effectively, particularly for those of middle and higher ability. Such pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils understand the school's very high expectations of their behaviour. They work hard in lessons and actively support each other's learning. They are happy and enthusiastic. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour in class or around the school during the inspection.
- School leaders record any incidents of less good behaviour systematically. They use this information to work out how they can help individuals to behave better. Their records show that pupils' already very good behaviour is improving further.
- Pupils are confident and very friendly. They go out of their way to be polite towards visitors and to look after them. They are respectful towards each other and the adults they work with. They are proud of their school and show commitment towards it. A school council member said to an inspector that their role was to 'try to make the school an even better place to be'.
- Attendance rates for all groups of pupils at least match the national average, even for those groups which typically have lower attendance. Attendance is improving over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils' starting points in the early years are lower than those typically seen for children of their age. They make good progress over their time in the school and leave

Year 6 with overall attainment around the national average. This reflects the high quality care and effective teaching they receive.

- Children start to catch up quickly in the early years, although many move into Year 1 with attainment which still remains below that generally seen in other schools. The new approaches to teaching in the school, including of phonics, reading and writing, are speeding up rates of progress in key stage 1. This can be seen in the marked increase in the Year 1 phonics screening check results in 2016 compared to previous years.
- In 2016, the overall proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the national key stage 2 assessments were at or above those seen nationally. This was also the case for pupils of middle ability and the most able. However, apart from the most able pupils in mathematics, few reached even higher attainment.
- In general, there is little difference between the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils and others, including those who are most-able. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is lower than others, reflecting such pupils' typically lower starting points. This pattern is also seen in other subjects, including grammar, punctuation and spelling, and science. The school's provision, supported by the additional pupil premium funding, ensures that disadvantaged pupils do not fall further behind others. However, leaders and teachers could still do more to secure the accelerated progress needed for disadvantaged pupils to catch up.
- Pupils' work in class and in their books indicates that their progress from their starting points in different subjects builds as they get older. However, tasks set sometimes do not challenge pupils sufficiently. Teachers do not capitalise enough on pupils' good engagement in class to secure even faster rates of progress.
- School leaders successfully ensure that pupils' learning is not restricted to formal subjects. They recognise that, for many pupils, continuing development of their social skills, confidence and independence is needed to allow them to make progress in their more formal learning. Children in the early years make particularly rapid gains in such wider skills. These aspects continue to develop securely as pupils get older. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children develop and learn well in Nursery and Reception. Most children's starting points are lower than typical for children of their age. When they join the school, some have particular gaps in their experience, for example in communication and language. Once at school, they make rapid progress, quickly being able to follow routines, and to play and learn with others. This progress continues throughout the early years. By the time children move to Year 1, their attainment is closer to that expected for others of their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is increasing over time so the number fully ready to join key stage 1 is increasing. As in the rest of the school, disadvantaged children make similar progress to others, although their attainment tends to be somewhat lower.
- Leaders and other staff provide activities and resources which children enjoy.

Relationships between staff and children are very strong, which allows children to build their skills and confidence as they talk with adults. This helps children to learn more as they play. There is plenty of space and this is well used by staff to organise different learning activities to capture children's interest. The outdoor areas, particularly for Reception, have recently been improved. Leaders are aware that this development could be further enhanced to provide an even more creative and imaginative environment.

- Leadership of the early years is effective and teamwork between staff is very strong. Teaching assistants are clear about the contribution they are expected to make to the learning of groups and individuals. Teachers and teaching assistants are provided with effective training. This contributes to the effective teaching that children receive.
- Children behave very well, particularly in the Nursery. They listen carefully and follow instructions. An inspector saw children in Reception trying very hard as they practised the early stages of reading and writing. They were keen to show off their phonics skills and proud of the way they could write letters and simple words. Their achievement in these aspects represents very rapid progress since the start of this school year.
- Leaders and teachers recognise the importance of their strong links with children's families. They make details of the planned activities available so that it is easier for parents to talk to their children about what they have done. In addition, they provide books for children to take home and share with their parents. Parents are very supportive of the work done by early years staff and expressed their satisfaction to inspectors. They confirmed that the early years provision meets the learning and wider needs of their children.
- Children are safe. They are closely supervised, particularly when there may be any additional hazards. Staff are well informed about safeguarding and know what signs to look for which could indicate that a child is at risk. Leaders and teachers know about children's wider welfare needs and make sure that these are met.

School details

Unique reference number	134599
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012439

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Dowley
Headteacher	Mr Mark Millar
Telephone number	01695 720018
Website	www.woodlandschool.co.uk
Email address	head@woodland.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 April 2013

Information about this school

- Woodland Community Primary School is of above-average size.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. However, the proportion of pupils of other heritages is increasing.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. An average proportion have education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs.
- The school is a teaching school. The headteacher is a national leader of education. He and other teachers provide significant support for local schools and more widely. The school leads its own initial teacher training programme. The school is a partner in SHARES Lancashire, which is a consortium of local schools providing joint training and other services for schools.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about admissions, pupils' achievement, the curriculum, the school's use of the pupil and sports premiums, complaints and governors on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all years of the school, including the early years. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, and a group of teachers and other members of staff. They met formally with two groups of pupils and spoke to others during lessons and at other times during the school day. An inspector met a group of governors and had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors.
- An inspector met two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books during lessons and during a scrutiny of samples of written work across a range of pupils and subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed documents including school policies, safeguarding information, the school's own evaluation of pupils' progress and of school effectiveness, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and information about the performance management of teachers.
- The school's work on the second day of the inspection was not typical because activities had been planned around the 2016 'Children in Need' appeal.
- No responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were received. Inspectors had informal discussion with parents and other family members as they brought pupils to school.

Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Parker	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Ofsted Inspector

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