

Woodfall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135019
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	341601
Inspection dates	04–05 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Mr Kevin Johnson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Mellor
Headteacher	Mr F J Toop
Date of previous school inspection	May 2007
School address	Woodfall Lane Little Neston Neston CH64 4BT
Telephone number	0151 338 2288
Fax number	0151 353 1402
Email address	head@woodfall.cheshire.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 16 lessons and saw 15 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's own assessments, policies and minutes, including documentation related to the curriculum and safeguarding. They also looked at the monitoring evidence gathered by the school. Eighty-seven questionnaires completed by parents and carers were scrutinised as well as a sample of pupils' questionnaires.

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

- whether standards at Key Stage 1 had improved, with a special focus on more-able pupils
- the impact of the school's revised curriculum on pupils' learning and achievement
- how effectively leaders and managers have brought about improvement in the school.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average size. A very large majority of its pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The slightly above average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities includes 10 pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and who are supported through specially funded provision. The school has achieved many external awards, recognising its work to enrich the curriculum and to promote pupils' health and well-being. Most recently the school has gained the Full International Schools Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

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

Strong leadership and the provision of outstanding care, guidance and support have helped to bring about improvements in key areas and enabled progress from a satisfactory to a good school. The school has judged its work accurately. Rising standards at both key stages, improved teaching quality, a challenging curriculum and a strongly committed staff amply demonstrate the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection. Children's learning and development are given a good start. Most enter Reception with abilities which are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress, particularly in their personal social and emotional development, so they are well prepared for their later stages of learning. Good progress continues throughout the school. This is due to teaching which is mostly good. There is some outstanding practice in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes as well as in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, there is also some inconsistent practice, most notably in the way teachers use marking to challenge pupils to improve their work. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Inspection evidence indicates good improvement in attainment, especially in the proportion of pupils on track to reach Level 5 in mathematics. The rich and varied curriculum provides good learning opportunities which contribute well to learning and personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Leaders and managers are clearly focused on driving through improvement. They contribute fully to the school's development planning and are a strong cohesive team. While monitoring of the school's work is well planned, evaluation of evidence requires more rigour. Leaders recognise, for example, that in order to help further progress, their evaluation of the effectiveness of provision now needs a sharper focus on what pupils learn rather than what teachers provide. Governors provide good challenge. They know the school well and are influential in supporting the headteacher and staff to bring about improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by:
 - focusing more sharply on what pupils learn as a result of what teachers do.

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of marking so that:
 - it is consistent throughout the school and across all subjects
 - it provides both the guidance and challenge that pupils need to improve their work further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn well because they enjoy lessons. They are attentive to adults in the classroom and work well with partners, for example when solving problems. They work hard and take pride in what they do. Pupils particularly enjoy being engaged practically, such as when using computers or when lessons are more active. The consensus of pupils' views is that, 'Lessons are fun because teachers get us to do things.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Progress has particularly gathered pace in Years 1 and 2 where previous shortcomings in teaching deterred pupils' progress. Improved systems for checking individuals' progress through the year also contribute to a better pace of learning for the whole school, because target setting is more precise and challenging. As a result, standards are rising at the end of Year 6, and in Year 2 more pupils than previously are on track to achieve above the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well in relation to their individual targets. Those within the primary resource-based group are extremely well provided for and benefit greatly from the highly skilled intervention and support for their learning.

Pupils' thoughtful and sometimes exemplary behaviour does them great credit and adds to the caring and supportive ethos of the school. Their above average attendance is indicative of their positive attitudes. They are very keen to take on responsibilities which help the school to run smoothly by acting as play leaders, eco-warriors or school council members. Peer mentors are always on hand to restore a sense of justice on the few occasions when playground relationships falter. Pupils are fully aware of what it means to maintain a healthy lifestyle and the possible implications of not doing so. They are adamant that they eat sensibly at home and the take-up of places at after-school sports club justifies their achievement of Activemark. As a result of their good academic achievement and well developed personal and social skills, pupils are well placed, by the time they leave Year 6, on their journey towards a secure future.

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	2
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]/[skills] that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers engage pupils well in learning. They use electronic whiteboards and question pupils effectively to add pace to lesson and keep pupils on their toes. There is a good balance between time for instruction and practical activity. Good planning means that learning objectives are clear and teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. The most effective teaching seen was characterised by an interesting range of activities which were very accurately matched to pupils' varying abilities. Support provided by teaching assistants was exceptionally well targeted, resulting in all pupils making excellent progress in lessons. Sometimes pupils do not make the best progress they can because they are not given all the support they need to help them start their work so that, in effect, too much is expected of them. Teaching assistants provide skilful and often sensitive support for pupils and are valued members of the teaching team. Teachers know pupils' abilities well because very effective systems for sharing assessment information enable them to check progress and set and review targets regularly. Day-to-day help for pupils through marking is inconsistent across the school. The rigour sometimes applied to the marking of pupils' writing in literacy books, for example, is not seen in all classes or in other written subjects.

A recently revised approach to curriculum planning has improved opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a more creative way. In one lesson, for example, pupils used laptops to design a circus, using symbols to direct people to different areas such as seating or refreshments. This not only prepared them to write stories based on a circus theme but effectively introduced them to geography skills; in particular, using maps. Learning is enhanced by a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils achieve well in sports and the arts subjects, as demonstrated by the strong choir and equally impressive school orchestra, as well as by French, which is taught from Year 2 to Year 6.

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

Parents and carers agree overwhelmingly that their children are safe and exceptionally well cared for in school. Pupils fully endorse that view. They are confident of support from adults and feel very safe as a result. Pupils are known and valued as individuals and fully welcomed into a highly supportive and stimulating environment. The school works extremely hard to help pupils who experience particularly difficult learning and emotional needs. There are well established links with external agencies which can best provide the additional help they need. Parents and carers are very happy with the quality of information they receive about their children’s progress. Some comment specifically on the marked improvements in that aspect of support. Arrangements for pupils starting and leaving the school are very good. Continuity in learning and development, especially for pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable, is given high priority.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

A determined response from the headteacher and governors to the last inspection report has successfully steered the school through significant improvements. Relevant training for staff with management responsibilities has enabled them to contribute increasingly to the process of self-evaluation and form shared vision for, and ownership of, the school’s continued development. Senior leaders provide strong support by fulfilling a crucial role in monitoring and evaluating the school’s work. Leaders acknowledge that in order to build on their success more effectively, additional focus should be placed on pupils’ learning when planning the way forward. The school values all pupils equally and works vigorously to ensure that all have the opportunity to achieve well, whatever their particular needs may be. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good. Systems for recruiting staff are robust. Governors regularly seek advice and check that risk assessments are in order, and that pupils’ views are considered along with those of others. The school promotes community cohesion well. Good links with community groups give the school a high profile locally. Well established links with a South African school foster mutual exchange visits by staff and a wealth of information passed between the pupils of both schools. The school is now nurturing links with another school in the United Kingdom which has contrasting ethnic and social characteristics.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Most children's knowledge and skills are in line with expectations for their age when they start Reception. Good provision results in their good progress. By the end of Reception most work securely within their early learning goals and a significant number are more advanced, having reached good levels of development.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is integrated in all areas of learning so that children quickly settle to routines, make friends and become active, enthusiastic learners. A strong focus on teaching letters and sounds means that children are confident about attempting to read and write when playing independently. Sessions led by teachers are well planned and highly focused resulting, at times, in children's outstanding progress in particular lessons. These are always followed up with a good range of activities from which children can choose and consolidate their learning through exploration and play such as planning a picnic for the toys in the role-play area or making porridge for the Three Bears outside. Provision for children's welfare is good. They are welcomed into school, as are their parents and carers. Well established relationships ensure that children feel secure. Staff build well on this positive start by helping parents and carers to understand ways in which their children learn and how they can contribute to that process. Children's progress is carefully observed and evaluated by all staff members who use the information well to plan the next individual steps. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Teachers are keen to build on current improvement and recognise advantages that a better flow of activities between the two Reception classes could bring to children's learning and development.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A good number of parents and carers completed questionnaires. The vast majority of responses were entirely positive. A significant number highlighted the strength of communications and the supportive atmosphere which has resulted in their children's good progress. A very small number of concerns related to pupils' behaviour were raised but inspectors found no evidence to support the view that behaviour in school was not well managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Woodfall 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 376 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	61	32	37	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	77	20	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	66	30	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	54	35	40	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	62	33	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	56	33	38	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	62	30	34	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	45	41	47	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	54	38	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	51	37	43	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	52	38	44	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	72	23	26	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	74	22	25	1	1	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 all 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). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' 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.



06 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodfall Primary School, Neston, CH64 4BT

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you because you are so polite and well mannered. You talked to us very sensibly about how much you enjoy school, what fun your lessons are and how you make a handsome profit by selling potatoes from your allotment. We were greatly impressed by the school orchestra, including the bass guitar player! Well done for your above average attendance. That is very important so do keep it up.

Yours is a good school. You reach good standards in English, mathematics and science and achieve well in sports, art and music. Overall, you make good progress. We agree with you that your lessons are fun. Your teachers work very hard to make them so. All of the grown-ups in school take excellent care of you and that helps you to take very good care of one another.

We're sure you realise that your parents and carers, teachers and school governors are just as proud of your school as you are and, like you, would like it to be even better. That means helping you to reach higher standards that you already do. In order to help that to happen we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do two things. The first is to make sure they look very closely at what you learn from the activities they plan for you, so they know what to plan next. Secondly, we have asked that they mark all of your work equally well and make sure they always give you that extra challenge to improve on what you have done.

Thank you once again and good luck to all of you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 1231**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.