

Woodland Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134599
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	328930
Inspection date	16 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Mawer

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	347
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Mick Neal
Headteacher	Mr Mark Millar
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Heathgate Birch Green Skelmersdale WN8 6QH
Telephone number	01695 720 018

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	16 January 2009
Inspection number	328930

Fax number

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Age group 3-11

Inspection date 16 January 2009

Inspection number 328930

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The strategies being used to improve speaking and listening through the school and the impact on standards and progress.
- How well the school is tackling persistent absenteeism and the strategies it is using to try and raise attendance levels.
- How well cultural links are forged within the United Kingdom and in the wider world.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment information and the school's self-evaluation. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils, and questionnaires returned by parents were considered. A range of documentation was also examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school, which is situated in an area of severe social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a designated resource base for 12 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and those at risk of exclusion. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for Nursery and Reception children. Mobility is higher than average. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy Schools Status and the Basic Skills Quality Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school gives excellent value for money. The key to its success are the exceptional leadership skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher and a shared determination from all staff to improve their teaching further and give every pupil the best chance to succeed. Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation is part of the school's culture, involving all stakeholders. Governors and senior leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in its strategic direction. Governors bring with them a wide range of experience and effectively challenge the school. The key question of how to add further value to pupils' learning and well-being is regularly revisited in management meetings and forms the basis of continuous development. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection, moving major areas of provision from good to outstanding. There is every indication that the school has an outstanding capacity to maintain its exceptional performance.

Achievement is outstanding. In 2007, measures of progress from age 7 to age 11 put the school in the top 1% of the country. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Learning accelerates rapidly through Key Stage 2 and pupils make excellent progress. The school has been particularly successful in the last two years in increasing numbers reaching higher levels in national tests to around half of all pupils in Year 6. Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 remain below average overall, pupils make good progress. Pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress. The school is keenly aware of pupils' circumstances and through early intervention, highly skilled staff deliver effective programmes that remove their barriers to learning. Challenging targets set for pupils are consistently achieved and often exceeded. This confirms the high aspirations that staff have for their pupils.

Outstanding teaching, especially in Key Stage 2 and an exciting curriculum contribute considerably to pupils' excellent achievement and enjoyment. Pupils learn quickly because teachers' expectations are high and challenging work stretches them. Progress is accelerated through excellent planning and using assessment to match work precisely to pupils' needs. Pupils are very attentive in lessons because teachers use imaginative resources and activities to make the learning exciting. Excellent relationships help pupils to become confident and happy learners. Teaching has recently been boosted with a more creative curriculum. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wealth of visits, visitors and activities after school. Because speaking and listening is planned and practised more widely across the curriculum, standards have risen. Additional staffing and resources to support role play activities is impacting strongly on pupils' achievement in speaking and listening.

The school provides an exceptionally caring environment for all pupils to learn successfully. It has been very successful in removing the barriers that hinder the progress of many vulnerable pupils. Those excluded from other schools soon become engaged in their learning again. This is because staff value all pupils as individuals and work tirelessly to make sure they get the best from their time in school. Excellent attention is given to safety issues and safeguarding meets government requirements. Parents value the school highly and particularly appreciate the wonderful care their children receive. Teachers guide pupils very effectively in their learning. Excellent assessment systems give staff a clear picture of progress so that challenging targets can be set and reviewed with pupils. With the benefit of very good marking, pupils are taking an increased responsibility for their own learning in knowing their strengths and weaknesses.

Personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils strongly resist any form of bullying or racism. They respect the differences between each other and make sure that everyone keeps safe. They show a strong sense of responsibility for the tasks taken on in school. The school council share their good practice with other schools. Pupils test out healthy menus, ensuring everyone maintains their excellent understanding of staying fit and healthy. Pupils are very well equipped academically with the skills needed to succeed in the future. They also learn important life skills through cooking, shopping and raising funds for an adventure weekend. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in the good attendance of the large majority of pupils. Senior staff rigorously monitor and target pupils who regularly miss school. A breakfast club, walking bus and special events, which focus on promoting good attendance continue to receive a high focus. Despite the excellent strategies employed to reduce absence, a small but persistent number of pupils are poor attenders.

The school's contribution to community cohesion and pupils' cultural development are good. The school is seen as the centre for the local community and links are very strong, especially in working together to improve the environment. There are excellent partnerships with parents, other schools and support agencies. The school has been very successful in creating a happy and harmonious community from three separate schools. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The contribution within the school and with the local community is outstanding and promotes excellent attitudes to others amongst pupils. The understanding of European culture is very well promoted through visits to Northern France where pupils learn at first hand about the way others live. Special 'world weeks' add to the pupils' appreciation of cultures different to their own and the school introduces pupils to a variety of different languages. The school is in the process of strengthening further its existing good strategies to deepen pupils' awareness of global issues.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the EYFS is outstanding. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are very low for their age. A strong focus on language and personal development together with generous staffing levels results in children achieving very highly. Children get off to a very good start because effective induction arrangements, including home visits help staff to know each individual child. The children's welfare is a priority and this helps them to settle quickly and happily into the daily routines of school. Outstanding teaching, a vibrant curriculum and a very high standard of care enable most children to make rapid progress. The spacious and exceptionally well resourced role-play area is particularly successful in promoting speaking and listening. It is well staffed with adults who very effectively help children to improve their communication skills through timely interventions and exceptional support. The outdoor and indoor areas give children many meaningful opportunities to explore, investigate and have fun. There is a very good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Effective assessment procedures assist staff in quickly identifying and supporting those who have additional learning needs. Despite excellent progress, few pupils reach the learning goals by the end of Reception and standards are below average. The EYFS is led by an enthusiastic, dedicated and knowledgeable coordinator who ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including assigning a key person to each child.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance of those who frequently miss school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woodland Community Primary School, Lancashire, WN8 6QH

Thank you all very much indeed for the warm welcome you gave my colleague and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our day and appreciated how friendly you all were in talking about your school. I would like to tell you what we found out. You go to an outstanding school that provides you with an excellent standard of education. You are one of the best schools in the country. There is so much that is really special about your school, so I decided to write a list of all of the strengths.

- You make good and excellent progress right through the school because the teaching is outstanding and everyone in school cares for you greatly.
- By the end of Year 6 you are reaching above average standards.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work exceptionally hard to make your school the very special and highly successful place it is.
- You make a really good start in the Nursery and Reception because you learn so much through play.
- You are keen to work hard in lessons, always doing your best and behaving extremely well in and out of the classroom, so everyone feels safe.
- You all get on together, whether sharing your ideas as talking partners or dancing together at playtimes to keep fit and healthy.
- It was a pleasure to meet so many polite and responsible pupils. It was clear how proud you are to be members of the school council and local parliament.
- I never saw anything other than happy smiling faces and I can see why, because the learning is made fun through visits, visitors and lots of clubs.

Although your school is outstanding, there is one thing that you can all do to make it even better. The school has tried very hard to make sure that you all attend regularly and arrive on time and most of you do. I know how much some of you and your parents appreciate the breakfast club and walking bus and how much this has helped to improve your attendance. Your teachers are very pleased with how many of you are attending more often. However, the attendance of some pupils needs to improve further so they can benefit from the lovely things that happen in school and learn even more.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector