

Woodhall Primary School

Woodhall Lane, South Oxhey, Watford, WD19 6QX

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders and governors has brought about significant improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, pupils are making better progress and standards are rising in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders promote British values well across the curriculum, giving pupils practical opportunities to understand life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the playground and around the school is good. They have good attitudes to learning and say that they feel safe.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Most teachers are adept at asking challenging questions and have high expectations of the pupils, with the result that standards are improving across the school.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and give valuable support to pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The gaps in attainment between these pupils and their classmates, and with pupils nationally are closing because of the effective support they are given.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers provide learning opportunities that sufficiently challenge pupils, especially the most-able. Sometimes work is too easy or too hard for some groups to make the best possible progress.
- Marking is not consistently effective across the school. It does not always do enough to help pupils improve their work.
- In the early years, adults do not always make the most of activities to motivate children, extend their understanding and encourage them to write.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 11 lessons, including the Nursery. Some were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from each key stage, including the early years, and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils in the playground and the dining hall.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents. They analysed the 53 responses from the online Parent View survey and the 22 questionnaire responses returned by school staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documentation, including safeguarding policies, records and training; the school's evaluation of its own work; minutes of meetings of the governing body; attendance figures; and information about pupils' progress across the school, including in the early years.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodhall Primary is an average-sized primary school with a part-time Nursery.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A well above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for pupils in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school has its own 'nurture group' where individual support is given to children.
- The school has a breakfast club managed by the governing body.
- This year, three classes have been taught by temporary teachers due to difficulties in recruitment and staff absence.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make the best possible progress by:
 - ensuring that marking consistently shows pupils how to improve their work, and that pupils act on the advice they are given
 - adapting teaching during lessons so that it is not too hard or too easy
 - setting more demanding work for the most-able learners.
- Keep a closer check on the activities provided for children in the early years, so that their learning and interests can be extended and more of them are encouraged to write.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's mission statement to 'Aim high and reach the sky' is constantly pursued by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and shared by staff. As a result of higher expectations, standards have improved in the recent past and continue to improve. This clear vision has motivated teachers to move the school forward in spite of the turbulence experienced in staffing in the past year and a half.
- Senior leaders have checked teaching regularly. This has ensured that teachers are clear about what makes effective teaching. The deputy headteacher has successfully coached individuals to improve their teaching. As a result, teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- All subject leaders are given the opportunity to monitor their subject across the whole age range. Time is set aside at staff meeting for staff to check and agree on pupils' levels of attainment. Some pupils' work is tested against pupils' work in other local schools to make certain that assessments are accurate. There have been changes to staffing and some leaders are new to their roles. They have improved well with the support of the local authority, and are able to support colleagues in their teaching.
- Regular progress meetings ensure that all pupils make and exceed the progress expected of them. Pupils who are at risk of not keeping up are identified early and are given effective additional help to enable them to catch up. This has been very successful.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively for teaching eligible pupils in small groups, a nurture group and some one-to-one teaching. This has ensured that these pupils keep up with their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who are trained and monitored by the special educational needs coordinator. Senior leaders carefully monitor their progress to ensure they have equal opportunities to succeed.
- The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and this feeds into school improvement planning. Targets set for teachers to improve performance are closely linked to raising standards. Training is provided to address areas of relative weakness and the local authority has provided expert help.
- The vast majority of staff and parents are positive about the school. Concern about temporary staff taking classes has been resolved. Systems are in place to ensure that pupils are not affected and they make the best possible progress.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. A running track has been introduced, and this is well used by pupils. Pupils time each other, which helps to develop their mathematical skills as well as enhance their fitness and well-being. Sports coaches work effectively with teachers and pupils, and new physical education equipment has been purchased to provide a wider range of activities for pupils. This has encouraged greater participation in sporting events in school and the district. The school is currently working toward the Healthy Schools Plus award. This involves pupils in a long-term project to ensure greater fitness for pupils. Pupils have written to local supermarkets to ask them to stock up on healthy foods and put them as special offers to encourage parents to buy them.
- The school provides a well-run breakfast club. Routines are well established and supervision is good. Pupils have an enjoyable relaxed start to the day, with a wide variety of games. Older pupils play and teach younger pupils to play games, showing good social skills.
- The curriculum enriches pupils' life experiences and develops British values. During the inspection, all classes were involved in 'polling day'. Early years children were learning how to vote, developing early reading and writing skills. Pupils in Year 6 were writing their own manifestos. School council elections were also taking place and individuals were writing persuasive speeches for their place on the council.

- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Records show the school makes regular checks to keep pupils safe. The headteacher is an active member of several local agencies which support vulnerable families and keep children safe, and this enhances the school's work. She ensures that staff and governors are up to date on all aspects of safeguarding.
- Attendance is rigorously monitored and has now improved to be average. Staff are acutely aware that improved attendance is vital to raising standards and they do everything they can to support families to get pupils into school, even calling at homes to collect children. A range of rewards are offered each term and a special event organised for pupils with 100% attendance. This has proved very effective in improving attendance.
- The local authority has supported the school well at all levels through unsettled times. It has successfully given support to improve the quality of teaching and help new leaders in their roles. The early years provision has shown improvement through this support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors show effective leadership. They are aware of pupils' attainment and the upward trend in their achievement, but also recognise, rightly, that more needs to be accomplished. They have been involved in supporting the headteacher in managing the performance of staff and tackling underperformance. They readily seek the assistance of the local authority to set targets for the headteacher and the school. They are keen to develop professionally and attend the training offered by the local authority, including on safer recruitment and safeguarding.
 - Governors visit the school regularly and, once a year, have a 'Governor's Day' when they visit all classes and discuss with pupils their progress and their targets. This also gives them the opportunity to see pupils working, observe teaching and to see how the funding they have allocated has been used and whether it is effective. Governors have their own action plan as part of the school's overall plan. They are prepared to challenge the headteacher on decisions to achieve the best value for money. As a result, they ensure that finances are well spent.
 - Governors attend parent evenings to make themselves readily available to parents. They ensure that child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and that the school is a safe environment for pupils and staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground. Relationships with adults are very positive and this contributes to the warm nurturing ethos created in the school. Parents, staff and pupils agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils show an eagerness to listen and learn and enjoy their activities. They are respectful of adults and each other. This leads to a calm environment in classrooms and around the school.
- Pupils are confident and highly cooperative, both in the classroom and in the playground. They work and play together in pairs and groups without fuss, helping each other to achieve. Staff provide good role models to help pupils to develop a sense of right from wrong.
- Pupils requested and arranged a non-uniform day to raise money to send aid to the earthquake appeal for Nepal, showing compassion and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs. This shows how much the school is contributing to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The highly effective nurture group provides a secure setting for pupils to receive individual teaching, develop socially and emotionally and grow in confidence. One child was heard to say, 'I am good at this', showing his delight in being successful. Pupils frequently return to the nurture group to talk to the teacher and the younger pupils because they continue to feel its warmth and cherish the support they receive.
- Sometimes, pupils present their work poorly and their handwriting is untidy. They do not always take

notice of teachers' comments when they mark their work to ensure that they move forward in their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All staff are thoroughly checked for suitability to work with children and all visitors are also carefully monitored.
- Absences are closely monitored. There has been a significant reduction in the amount of unauthorised absence since the reward systems have been put in place. The introduction of rewards for those with 100% attendance has seen pupils cajoling parents so they can attend school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know who they should approach if they have any concerns. Bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that, should it occur, it would be dealt with swiftly. Parents and staff confirmed this.
- Adaptations to the curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and practical application of knowledge and skills. For example, on 'Fire Plan Friday', pupils took part in a Fire Service workshop. They worked both independently and collaboratively to produce 'escape plans' for their own homes and a list of 'what to do if' should a fire occur.
- E-safety is high on the agenda for pupils and for parents. Regular workshops take place for parents and, through newsletters, the school keeps parents advised on safety matters. Children know about smoking and other substances being harmful and are adamant that name-calling is rare.
- The school ensures that all outings are assessed for risk of harm to pupils before trips are undertaken.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is better than at the last inspection because the deputy headteacher has worked successfully alongside teachers to coach them and teachers have attended training in assessing pupils' progress. Attractive displays and work on walls consistently remind pupils of how to move forward in their learning without the need to ask an adult.
- Pupils learn well in most classes because they share ideas and work cooperatively. In the older classes, pupils were seen to discuss spelling mistakes before seeking the assistance of a dictionary to see what was wrong with what was written. This is encouraged throughout the school. Pupils have opportunities to discuss ideas, develop their thoughts and make good contributions to class topics and class discussion.
- Teaching assistants are well prepared for lessons and are able to support pupils well. They know when to intervene and when to stand back and let the pupils try for themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants have been trained to develop their questioning skills to facilitate discussion and to deepen understanding.
- Pupils' progress is assessed accurately each half term and any underachievement is quickly identified and appropriate support is given. Pupils are now more familiar with targets; they are encouraged to reflect upon their progress toward them and to understand what they need to do to get to the next level. This is helping to raise standards and accelerate progress.
- Teachers in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 work together, in school and with the staff of other schools, to check that their assessments are accurate. This has helped teachers to be clear about what is expected for each level of progress and plan work to speed up learning.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, adults have established good relationships with children and routines are secure. However, teaching requires improvement because children need more activities, or adults to extend activities, to help with reading, writing and number.

- Not all teachers use marking to help pupils improve their work. Sometimes questions are raised by the teacher but pupils' replies are not checked. This can result in pupils repeating mistakes.
- Sometimes work is not set at the right level for pupils. More-able pupils waste time listening to what they already know and finish the work quickly because the work is too easy for them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- There has been a small rise in attainment in both key stages in the recent past. In 2014, pupils' attainment in the Year 6 end-of-year tests was better than 2013 in mathematics and writing. However, reading dropped slightly to levels below those achieved nationally. Leaders analysed the questions asked of pupils and identified areas where they had been confused to avoid this happening again.
- Attainment in writing last year was in line with the national average. The school's current assessment data and inspection evidence suggest that pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to continue the overall rising trend in attainment, not only in writing but also in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in writing is good in Key Stage 2, with a higher proportion making better than expected progress than in schools nationally. Expected progress in mathematics was also better than that of pupils nationally. Progress was not as strong in reading because a lower than average proportion made the progress expected of them. However, the proportion making more than expected progress was close to the national average. Current progress information shows the vast majority of pupils are on track to make and exceed the expected two levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen in the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, it remained below the national average in writing but was in line in reading and mathematics. Current data and the work in children's books indicate the upward trend will continue and more pupils will meet the national averages this year.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Successful small group work and one-to-one tuition, provided by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants, ensure that these pupils make good progress in writing, which is above that of pupils nationally, and they make the same progress as their classmates in mathematics and reading. In 2014, these pupils' attainment was about two terms behind that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics and in line with other pupils' in the school in reading and mathematics but two terms behind in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from working in carefully monitored small groups, a strong, effective nurture group and effective teaching by teachers and teaching assistants. They make the same progress as their classmates and often increased progress because the school encourages training for teaching assistants with the special educational needs coordinator, who is a qualified trainer.
- The most-able pupils make the progress expected of them, but not enough reach the highest levels of attainment in mathematics and reading at the end of Year 6. However, current data and inspection evidence show that the most-able pupils this year are on track to exceed the previous Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, in some other year groups, the progress of the most able slows when the work is too easy for them.
- Older pupils express an enthusiasm and enjoyment of reading. They read with confidence and accuracy. Younger pupils used their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to help them break down unfamiliar words. Reading is promoted well by the school and, until his recent death, children were able to read to a large St Bernard dog named Amber as well as adults. This helped hesitant readers who were reluctant to read to another child or adult. The school is going to adopt another dog to assist pupils' self-confidence.

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonic screening in Year 1 was well below the national average in 2014. This was due to the low starting points in speaking and listening skills when children joined the early years. More work is being undertaken to increase and extend opportunities for pupils to talk, discuss and listen to others to help improve their skills.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start at the school with significant gaps in their development especially in speaking and listening and social and emotional development. They are well below levels typical for their age. They have not made enough progress in all areas of development in the recent past to ensure that they are ready for the next stage in school life. However, children's progress is beginning to accelerate this year. Adults are more aware of using opportunities to observe children and discuss progress with each other. This has made their assessments more secure and planning more focused.
- Training provided by the local authority has improved the quality of the leadership and the teaching skills of the staff but this is new and has not had time to completely have the desired impact.
- Staff are trying to increase children's speaking and listening skills by improving the way they question them. They do not always follow this up when children work on practical activities and they do not guide children towards activities where they can practise their writing skills. For example, clipboards are left in play areas for children to use for writing, but staff do not draw their attention to them.
- The outside area is used well and some areas are being developed to give further opportunities to dig and build. Good use is made of both the inside and outside accommodation. Plentiful resources provide ample imaginative play opportunities. Real objects, like shells and starfish, help to extend children's experiences and understanding of the world around them. During the inspection, play included a polling booth and voting slips. Two children ticked off the names of those who came to vote, helping them with word recognition and developing their communication and social skills.
- Children are happy in this safe secure setting. Each day the area is checked to make sure it is safe for children to play. Children behave well and respond readily to teachers' instructions. Praise is used well, adding to children's growing self-confidence. Outside help, for example, the speech and language therapist, is used well and the advice is listened to and acted upon.
- Parents are welcome in the Nursery and the Reception classes. There is a 'stay and play' time set aside and an additional focus with children and carers on creative arts, messy play and the morning 'busy fingers' initiative to focus children to explore their ideas and the materials around them.
- The leader is developing a cohesive team. Weekly team meetings take place to review children's progress and discuss developments with team members. The local authority has provided training for all adults who work in the early years. This has included the use of new software to help with observations and assessment. However, some of this is too new to have had an impact.
- Achievement has improved dramatically this year. Children are making better progress than ever before.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117194
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462099

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Millard
Headteacher	Lesley Spence
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2013
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