

Woodthorpe Primary School

Lewis Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S13 8DA

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | 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 | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from low starting points and achieve well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported effectively.
- Children make good progress in the early years and are prepared well to start Year 1.
- Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy engaging activities that hold their interest and inspire them to learn.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are safe and well looked after. Their attendance has improved and is now close to average.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to their successful learning.
- Through the wide range of trips, music, art, sport and other activities, the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are prepared effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders, including governors, are committed to raising standards for all pupils. Improvements to teaching have led to standards rising steadily since the previous inspection.
- The governing body is effective at holding the school to account for the achievement and safety of pupils. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths and aspects that need attention.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently challenging the most-able pupils and their progress is not always fast enough.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1, particularly in writing and mathematics, although improving, is not rising as quickly as at Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work. When comments are provided, pupils do not always respond.
- Not all middle leaders make a full contribution to checking teaching and the progress pupils make in the subjects they lead.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching throughout the school, including shared observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work in their books and listened to them read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors also had a conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including the school’s evaluation of its own performance, current data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation. Financial management was reviewed, including the spending of funding for disadvantaged pupils and primary school sport funding. Records relating to behaviour and attendance, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, were also taken into consideration.
- Inspectors reviewed nine responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also took account of the views of the 18 parents they spoke with during the inspection.
- No staff submitted Ofsted’s staff inspection questionnaires, but staff did contribute their views through discussions over the two days and these were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Rajinder Harrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Johnson

Additional Inspector

Paul Spray

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the nursery attend part time until they enter the Reception class.
- While the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, around 25% are from a number of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very small.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils deemed disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium is well above average. (These pupils include those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school has had a high number of staff changes since its previous inspection, including a change of headteacher and other changes at leadership level.
- The school is part of the City Community Learning Trust, along with three other schools. The trust is a limited company with charitable trust status.
- The headteacher is currently the executive head of two of the schools in this trust.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and further accelerate pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 1, by making sure that:
 - the most-able pupils, including children in the early years, are always challenged sufficiently
 - teachers have higher expectations of all pupils, especially at Key Stage 1, in writing and mathematics
 - teachers' marking makes it clear to pupils how to improve their work and that pupils respond to comments and learn from their errors.
- Strengthen the role of middle managers by ensuring that they monitor the quality of learning and progress of pupils within their areas of responsibility more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Leaders, staff and governors are strongly focused on enabling every pupil to achieve as well as they can. High expectations of staff ensure that pupils make good progress and develop strong personal skills by the time they leave in Year 6. Aspirations are high, but are being realised effectively through good provision, particularly for the pupils who are the most disadvantaged.
- The school's checks on its overall performance are accurate. The school's plan for future development correctly identifies current priorities and actions are precise and effective. The capacity to improve further is good.
- The school's success is supported effectively by robust systems to manage staff performance. Teachers are set targets linked to their performance and salary rewards are connected to achieving these targets. Weaknesses are remedied through appropriate training and mentorship. Teaching is improving, although a few issues remain to be resolved. New teachers are supported effectively and leaders conduct regular observations of teaching to make sure pupils achieve well.
- Staff are very positive about the school and particularly about pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning. There is strong team work evident throughout the school and pupils benefit from the positive climate for learning.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are robust and the resulting information is used effectively by senior leaders to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. Additional support is initiated quickly to help them and this ensures that overall the promotion of equality of opportunities is successful.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are not yet fully effective. Some are relatively new to these responsibilities and their roles in monitoring progress and bringing about improvements are not yet fully effective particularly in checking consistency in the provision for the most-able pupils and in Key Stage 1.
- The curriculum is planned well and provides positive experiences that encourage pupils to want to learn. Topics link subjects together so that learning makes better sense to pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were fascinated as they considered the impact of de-forestation in the Amazon, both in that area and also the wider implications for the planet long term. The needs of most pupils are met, although at times the most able are not sufficiently challenged in writing and numeracy tasks, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Through an extensive range of visits, visitors and links with other schools and communities, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils study diverse faiths and cultures through thought-provoking assemblies and discussions in class and so are better informed in their understanding of what it is to be British, but are equally aware that they need to respect the values of other communities.
- The school has plans in place to support teachers to implement national changes to assessment and effective partnership work with other schools is strengthening competence and confidence.
- The additional funding to provide disadvantaged pupils with the help they need to achieve well is used very effectively. Home - school links have been strengthened, more parents are involved in supporting their children's learning and attendance has risen. These pupils are performing as well as their classmates and achieving better than similar pupils nationally.
- The primary schools additional sport funding is used well to increase opportunities for pupils to engage in sports and to train teachers so that they provide a richer programme of sports activities. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about swimming, inter-school competitions, gymnastics and football.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school. Advice is provided about performance through reviewing data and providing effective support for staff and governors to bring about improvements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a good contribution to the quality of the education the school provides. Governors bring a range of experience and expertise to the school and have a good understanding of the school's current priorities. There is a strong commitment to pupils and the local community and aspirations to make the school outstanding are high. Governors are effectively involved in monitoring the school's performance. They are well informed about the school's performance and the quality of teaching. As a result, they ask pertinent questions about pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching and are diligent in holding leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They work with the headteacher and other leaders to identify and address weaknesses quickly. However, they are not challenging staff sufficiently when policies, such as those for marking, are not adhered to consistently.

Governors are involved in decisions regarding teachers' pay and make sure that any action the school takes to make improvements leads to pupils making better progress. Governors make sure safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand that learning is important and know the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and this is having a positive impact on their progress. Most pupils persevere and try their best, but occasionally, when teaching is not good, there is some low-level distracted chatter, and so a few do not achieve as well as they could, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the dining hall is good. Despite the heavy downpour during the inspection, and so no playtime, pupils quickly found productive ways to occupy themselves and enjoyed socialising with their friends.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and considerate to others. Older pupils are mindful of their responsibility to help younger ones and do so effectively by setting a good example and also befriending children new to the school. Members of the school council meet regularly with governors to present pupils' views and discuss things they would like to see improved around the school and act as good ambassadors for the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents are particularly appreciative of the outstanding care arrangements for disabled pupils and those who are particularly vulnerable and say that staff go that extra mile to look after their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including the dangers posed by social media sites and prejudice-based bullying, including homophobic name-calling. They say that it is wrong to call people names, because it is hurtful and unkind. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and are confident that if it did occur, staff would deal with it immediately. Parents reiterate this view strongly.
- The school has worked hard with parents to improve attendance. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school and stay with them at the start of the day to help them with their 'morning challenge'. As a result, punctuality has improved and attendance rates are now close to average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Typically, teaching throughout the school is good. It is best in Key Stage 2 and the early years, where progress is more rapid. However, most pupils make good progress and it is only on occasions that teaching does challenge the most-able pupils and pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, there is a calm, productive atmosphere across the school. Pupils' learning and hard work is valued and they always try to do their best.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively in other subjects, particularly in Key Stage 2, where the work in pupils' topic books is as good as that found in their literacy and numeracy books. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not as confident in their writing and numeracy skills, because they are not always challenged sufficiently through their work. However, teachers provide pupils with a good range of activities to increase their vocabulary and reading skills so that they speak and read more confidently and so write with greater independence. For example, pupils in a Year 1 lesson talked assuredly about 'the biggest predators in the world live in the Arctic and they are really dangerous', and were totally captivated by such possibilities, composing graphic images of wild beasts in their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is good, particularly at Key Stage 2, where pupils have developed a good understanding of number and are more adept at applying their skills to solve complex problems.
- Relationships are a real strength and give pupils the confidence to try hard. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their learning and ask for help if they need it. In Key Stage 2, pupils have extensive opportunities to discuss their ideas and take part in question/answer sessions with teachers and with each other.
- Teachers often use questions successfully to deepen and strengthen pupils' learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, this effective practice is not yet routine across all teaching.

- Much of the work pupils do is matched accurately to their ability and so they make good gains in their learning. However, at times this is not the case and the most able are not challenged sufficiently and a few of the less confident learners become inattentive, go off task and so achieve little. On occasions, pupils are not totally clear about what is expected of them and so do not do their best work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and expertise that they use effectively to plan interesting work to extend pupils' skills. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and receive good support to help them achieve well. Their progress is checked closely and carefully planned activities ensure that these pupils keep pace with their classmates.
- Pupils rate their teachers highly and say that they enjoy their lessons because teachers make them fun. They particularly like the challenges teachers set at the start of the school day to help pupils apply their skills and work on projects of their own. As one pupil said, 'We never know what the challenge is going to be but we know it will be interesting and fun, and it is really good when I can do it better than my mum.'
- Teachers' marking and feedback to pupils is of high quality in some classes, but not consistently in all classes and all subjects. Some marking does not give sufficient advice to pupils about how to improve their work and even when the advice is given, not all pupils take note of this, and so subsequent work does not improve significantly.

The achievement of pupils is good

- As a result of the actions taken by senior leaders to improve teaching and raise expectations of pupils, progress is rising quickly. Progress is the most rapid in the early years and Key Stage 2, where teaching is the strongest. Given pupils' individual starting points, achievement is good and pupils are well prepared for the next step of their education by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1, while still below average, especially so in writing and mathematics, have improved year on year and pupils make good progress overall from their low starting points. This enables them to narrow the gap towards what is expected for their age, although few reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average at the end of Year 6. The results of national assessments show a rising trend in the numbers reaching the level expected for their age. More pupils are making the required progress and many now make more than this, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Although overall the progress of the most-able pupils is good by time they leave school, as can be seen by more reaching the higher Level 5, this progress is variable through the school. This is because work is not always set that is hard enough to ensure that they always make as much progress as possible. The most able are not always challenged sufficiently, especially in mathematics and writing, to reach the higher Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Attainment in reading is strong at both key stages, and moving to above average at the end of Key Stage 2, because the teaching of reading is good. The good focus on the teaching of phonics (the letters and their sounds) in the early years and Key Stage 1 has resulted in a higher than average number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national Year 1 screening assessment check in 2014. Pupils use these skills well to help them read new words and extend their skills. Older pupils enjoy reading, but some do not do so regularly enough, especially at home, to help them achieve more. Nevertheless, in Year 6 many use their skills successfully to locate information, as well as for pleasure.
- Standards in writing are rising, but more so at Key Stage 2, where pupils gain confidence and are challenged more through writing at length in other subjects and an increasing number are attaining the higher levels. Pupils understand how to write in different styles and are applying their skills of grammar and punctuation more successfully. At Key Stage 1, pupils do not always write enough to practise their basic skills and become confident writers.
- In mathematics, there is a steady development of key number skills, but because of children's poor grasp of number when they start school in the early years, progress does not accelerate significantly until Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confidently applying their skills to solve multi-step problems, for example, and so more are attaining at the higher levels.
- Pupils from minority backgrounds, including the small proportion who speaks English as additional language achieve well if they have been at the school for long enough, because they are supported well.
- Disabled pupils and those who special educational needs make good progress. Provision meets their needs successfully because support for them is good and they are challenged appropriately.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. For Year 6 pupils in the 2014 tests and assessments, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was two terms ahead of other pupils' nationally in reading and mathematics and at the same level as pupils nationally in writing. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils were

more than two terms in advance of their classmates in reading and mathematics and about a term ahead in writing. Gaps in achievement have closed effectively and are doing so rapidly lower down the school, because staff cater for the needs of these pupils very effectively.

The Early Years provision

is good

- At the end of the Reception Year in 2014, the overall number of children reaching good levels of development was close to average. Current children make good progress from attainment on entry, which is lower than what is typical for this age group. Early indications are that progress is accelerating so that more children are now well prepared for starting in Year 1.
- The early years leader provides clear direction as to what needs to be done to ensure that the progress children make continues to improve. For example, staff visit all children at home before they start in the nursery to make early assessments and plan activities appropriate to individual abilities and identify any that have any specific needs. Children who join in the Reception class also receive this good attention so that no matter when children start, they all make equally good progress.
- Relationships with parents are positive and arrangements to introduce children to school life before they start formally are good. Frequent contact with school and home and visits into the nursery help children settle quickly and happily adjust to routines in the classroom. Parents are given good guidance as to how they can support their child's learning and development at home and at school.
- Children learn well as a result of the consistently good teaching. In a happy, safe environment children behave well and feel safe. They quickly adopt high levels of independence when they choose what they are going to do and explain what they have learnt. Their communication skills, which are often limited when they start school, improve rapidly because of many opportunities to discuss their ideas. Children learn to cooperate with others, for example when sharing toys and in role-play activities. Occasionally lapses do occur, but these are quickly resolved because staff expect good behaviour at all times.
- Children engage enthusiastically in well-organised activities that capture their interest, but are equally happy to manage their own learning. Assessments of children's achievement are accurate and activities are planned effectively to extend their skills quickly. For example, children loved drawing and naming letters and shapes in the sand and were delighted when they managed this without help. Occasionally, the level of challenge is not sufficiently high for the most-able children who are capable of more, particularly in their literacy and numeracy.
- Disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs are identified early and planning to support their needs so that they participate fully in everything that their friends enjoy, is good.

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

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|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Unique reference number | 107071 |
| Local authority | Sheffield |
| Inspection number | 448333 |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 393 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Larry Angel MBE |
| Headteacher | David Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 May 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0114 239 9167 |
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