

Woodthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107071
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	295350
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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 on roll	
School	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Angel
Headteacher	Mr Chris Thew
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2006
School address	Lewis Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S13 8DA
Telephone number	0114 2399167
Fax number	0114 2399167

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school draws pupils from an area of considerable social disadvantage. A larger than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Few pupils speak languages other than English at home and most are of White British heritage. Children arrive in school with very low skills, particularly their language skills. The school achieved Investors in People status in December 2006. It is currently working towards ArtsMark, Healthy Schools status and the Leading Parent Partnership award. The school was given a Notice to Improve in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Woodthorpe Primary is a satisfactory and fast improving school, with several good elements to its work. This is because the headteacher offers strong leadership and clear direction. The determination to improve the school's provision and pupils' achievement drives the relentless improvement agenda. The headteacher and the new deputy headteacher expect and promote best practice throughout the school. Effective leadership permeates all levels of management. Consequently, the school's performance is accelerating and improvement continues apace. Even so, inspection findings show some of the school's externally supported self-evaluation to be overly positive. The school has moved on considerably in a short time. Leaders have dealt with the issues raised at the last inspection. Current improvement is sustainable because leadership at all levels is strong. As a result, the school shows good capacity to improve. It currently provides satisfactory value for money.

Good quality and standards in the Foundation Stage ensure that children get off to a strong start despite very low initial skills, particularly their language skills. Pupils' achievement through the school is satisfactory. Standards by Year 6 are exceptionally low, particularly in writing and science. However, standards rose in 2006 and this improvement continues. Inspection evidence shows pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets set for 2007. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some consistently good practice. Inconsistencies prevail, however, and these currently restrict the progress pupils make. Enthusiastic teachers, support staff and mentors encourage pupils to make the most of their time in school. Pupils comment that 'Teachers are supportive and help you all the way.' The rich curriculum offers a range of experiences that capture pupils' interest and help them to learn about safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils' personal development is good and their positive attitudes and behaviour ensure that they work well and respond to teachers' high expectations. Rising attendance reflects pupils' increasing enjoyment of school and predicts reliability for their future employers. Pupils know that when they are absent, staff will check why. This is just one example of the good pastoral care, academic guidance and personal support for pupils.

Parents comment on 'the patience, dedication and care of the teachers'. Staff know their pupils well and offer the right levels of support so that each can make appropriate gains in their learning. Nevertheless, pupils do not consistently help to set their own targets for learning. Nor do they always understand what the targets mean. This restricts pupils' progress. The school develops good relationships with outside support agencies. Their representatives bring much expertise into school. The school values parental contributions to school life and tries to offer parents the training courses they request. The school is at the heart of the local community and pupils gain valuable experience of how to become productive citizens.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement and the standards they reach throughout the school, particularly in writing and science, so more pupils attain the nationally expected levels.

- Raise the quality of satisfactory lessons to that of the best to accelerate and sustain pupils' achievement.
- Improve pupils' achievement by involving them in setting and reviewing their own clearly worded targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Nursery age children join the school with very low level skills, particularly in language. They grow in confidence and make good progress through the Foundation Stage. Approximately one child in four attains the expected levels in both social and language development by Year 1. In 2006, Year 2 pupils attained the highest standards for four years. This represents a significant rise on 2005 standards as more pupils reached the higher levels. Even so, standards were still exceptionally low. Pupils attained best in mathematics. Standards in writing also rose while those for reading remained at 2005 levels. By Year 6, pupils' attainment in 2006 was still exceptionally low overall and particularly in writing and science. Nevertheless, standards were the highest for five years and standards in English, mathematics and science all rose. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels almost doubled. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory in 2006. Inspection evidence confirms that this improvement continues and current pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Teachers' monitoring indicates that more pupils will attain the higher levels this year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils because of the skilful support provided by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning and eagerly participate in all activities. Average attendance rates reflect pupils' and parents' commitment to the school. Parents make positive observations about the school, such as: 'My child loves school with a passion.' Pupils behave well. They are proud of the new building and take good care of it. Pupil councils make positive contributions to the school's work. For example, they are improving safety in and around the school. Rare instances of bullying and racism are dealt with swiftly. High quality assemblies contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through their work as peer mediators, befrienders and fundraisers. Pupils understand how to live safe and healthy lives. For example, increasing numbers enjoy the good quality lunches and eat healthy fruit snacks. Pupils develop self-confidence. Their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded through the use of awards such as 'Smile of the Day'. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to equip them for work. They have good opportunities to develop initiative and independence but opportunities to set their own learning targets and to check how well they are doing are inconsistent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Secure relationships and the effective management of pupils contribute to satisfactory and increasingly good lessons. Parents value teachers' work and say: 'Teachers nurture and encourage effort and ability.' In the Foundation Stage, adults strike a good balance between practical

activities and the teaching of key skills. As a result, children are interested and learn well. Lessons are especially successful when teachers set demanding tasks and deliver lively presentations. Well trained teaching assistants and mentors contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers usually share clearly with pupils what they want them to learn. However, at the end of lessons, they do not always enable pupils to share and consolidate what they have learned. Teachers assess and track pupils' progress thoroughly. Marking acknowledges and celebrates their efforts. However, some comments are too general. Others do not spell out what a pupil needs to do next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Creative and practical activities provide excellence and enjoyment for pupils. These engage pupils' interest whatever their need. Parents agree that pupils with specific physical needs can enjoy all aspects of the curriculum as the new building offers easy access to learning spaces on both floors. Staff make increasingly strong links between subjects to promote progress. For example, pupils consolidate their writing skills while reporting on a scientific investigation. However, there is not always sufficient emphasis on improving literacy skills during these activities. Similarly, in the Nursery and Reception classes, reading and writing areas do not provide enough stimulating opportunities for children to look at books or consolidate their early writing skills. A good range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities enthuses pupils and enables them to experience exciting new activities. There is specific provision for pupils with gifts and talents in areas such as performing arts and sport to extend their learning and improve the progress they make. The whole-school focus on pupils' social and emotional development makes a positive contribution to their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults in the school know pupils well. Parents comment, 'Teachers rightly place as much emphasis on pupils' health and happiness as their education.' Procedures are in place for child protection and to ensure pupils' safety. The school enables a smooth transition for pupils when they join and when they move on to the next stage of their education. One new arrival commented, 'I was scared stiff at the start of my first day but by the end I had lots of friends.' The school nurtures good links with parents and gives them useful information that helps them participate in their children's education. There is well organised support for vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they achieve as well as others. Teachers track carefully pupils' academic attainment in order to identify and deal with weaknesses. Some older pupils check how well they are doing. This helps them to learn. The extent to which pupils set and review their targets is variable. As a result, pupils do not play a big enough role in contributing to how well they achieve. Some targets are too general to give pupils clear guidance about what they must do to improve. The language of some targets is too complex for pupils to understand easily.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors show commitment to raising pupils' achievement and recognise that standards are still too low. Focused leadership, well supported by the local authority, has ensured that issues from the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The new deputy headteacher supports teachers' professional development while boosting pupils' learning in lessons. Senior and subject leaders monitor lessons regularly and know the strengths and aspects to develop in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Administrative, lunchtime and ancillary staff contribute well to the smooth running of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities. They provide good levels of challenge and support for the school. Governors recognise how far the school travelled, saying 'We have taken strides rather than little steps.' Parents confirm that the school fosters a good partnership with them. They are increasingly involved in their children's learning. Popular family learning programmes encourage parents to participate. These improve parents' skills and help their children to learn at home.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Woodthorpe Primary School, Sheffield, S13 8DA

Thank you for your friendly welcome when I visited your school with Mrs Zaffar and Mr Pattinson. We enjoyed chatting to you, hearing what you think about your school and looking at your work. You told us you think your school is better now and we agree. You will remember that another group of inspectors visited your school some time ago. I am pleased to report that we judge your school to be much better now. It is a satisfactory school and is fast developing more and more 'good bits'. For example, we saw how well adults look after you. They make sure you all keep doing better in your learning and reach higher standards. They help you to become healthy and active citizens. We are very pleased that many more of you are coming to school regularly and on time. Your parents are making a big effort to make sure this continues, we know. You all work hard in lessons and behave well around school - well done and keep it up! We also saw many of your parents in class with you each morning. More and more are coming to special adults' classes too. This is really encouraging as they can give you more help with your learning at home. Don't let them forget!

Part of the reason for our visit was to see where your school could improve further. We have asked your headteacher to help all of you do better and reach higher standards, particularly in writing and science by the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6. We have also asked the adults who teach you to make some of their lessons even better so that lessons are all good or better. The last thing we have asked your teachers to do is to involve you more in setting and reviewing your own learning targets. This will help you to contribute more to how well you achieve. We are sure you will help your teachers to do all this by trying your best.

Carry on enjoying school and those delicious lunches.