

# Woodslee Primary School

Croft Avenue, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside, CH62 2BP

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Although pupils' rates of progress are improving there remain inconsistencies between different subjects and year groups. The proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected of them in writing and mathematics is not yet high enough.
- Standards in mathematics, although improving, remain below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet high enough.
- The quality of teaching over time is not yet consistently good enough to fully address the legacy of underachievement.
- Work is not always challenging enough to meet the needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Marking does not always provide guidance to help pupils improve their work, particularly in developing the basic skills of grammar and spelling.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and use their mathematics skills to solve problems.
- Homework arrangements are not clear. Not all teachers provide enough feedback on the work done at home to help pupils improve their learning.
- Parents do not receive enough information to be able to help their children with their learning or to be fully engaged in the life of the school.
- Middle leaders do not yet have the skills to help senior leaders check on and improve the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils with special educational needs, including those attending the inclusion base, make good progress from their starting points. This is because of the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school have narrowed.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide activities that engage pupils' interests well.
- The leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of the deputy headteacher who has added drive and impetus to the improvements begun by the headteacher.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and parents say that their children feel safe and cared for well.
- The early years is well led and is a strength of the school. Children get off to a flying start because of good teaching, warm relationships and the interesting and engaging activities provided.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. Governance has improved and governors provide effective support and challenge for school leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils’ work and listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they were currently reading.
- Inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with five governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day and took account of two letters from parents, 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school’s own recent survey of Year 6 parents’ views. Inspectors also took account of 14 responses to staff questionnaires completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the reported findings from two visits to the school made by HM Inspector of Schools since the previous inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including external reviews of the school’s work, safeguarding documents, records of current standards and progress, the school’s strategic plan and documents relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance. Minutes from governing body meetings and reports produced by the headteacher were also considered.

## Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Craig Richardson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger in size than most other primary schools. Around a quarter of pupils joined the Reception class from other Early Years settings in September 2014. This proportion varies from year-to-year.
- Most pupils are White British. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. An above average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus and the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils therefore eligible for support through pupil premium funding is rising and is now above average. This additional funding is provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school at other than the usual times.
- The school manages a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, catering for up to eight pupils with autism. Pupils attend from across the Wirral Borough. Some pupils spend some of their time in class with their year group in the main school. The school refers to this provision as 'the social communication inclusion base'.
- The school has experienced a number of staff changes and a significant number of staff absences since the last inspection. Changes to the senior leadership team have taken place with a new deputy headteacher joining the school in September 2013. Towards the end of the last academic year the responsibility for special educational needs moved to another teacher. A temporary new lead for the early years took up her responsibility in September 2014. A number of experienced teachers have moved to part-time roles; some of whom are supporting several members of staff who are new to the teaching profession.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good over time in order to increase pupils' progress and to raise standards, particularly in mathematics and for the most able in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
  - marking shows pupils how they can improve their work, including basic grammar and spelling skills, and that time in lessons is provided to make any corrections necessary
  - teachers use assessment information well when planning lessons so that pupils, particularly the most able, are always given work with the right amount of challenge
  - teachers provide more problem-solving activities so that pupils can practise and apply their mathematical skills more regularly
  - pupils and their parents know when homework that is linked to class work is to be set, that it is marked regularly and used to improve learning.
- Further strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders have the skills to check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress so that they can use this information to take a more active role in supporting senior leaders to drive school improvement
  - senior leaders and governors communicate more effectively with parents so they know how to support their children's learning and are fully informed about the life of the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### requires improvement

- Although the school has addressed many of the issues identified in the last inspection, there is still more to do to address the legacy of underachievement and secure consistently good achievement for pupils.
- Despite staff difficulties, including a high number of staff absences experienced since the last inspection, the headteacher has been successful in maintaining a strong focus on continuous improvement.
- An effective senior leadership team has been established and the governing body has acquired the necessary skills to be able to hold the school securely to account. As a result, the work of senior leaders and governors is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and demonstrates that the school has the capacity to continue to improve. However, too much still rests on the shoulders of the senior leadership team and the quality of leadership and management at the present time requires improvement.
- Middle leaders are now in post, albeit some on a temporary basis, and are beginning to develop the necessary leadership skills. However, the development of this team is at too early a stage to enable all leaders to fully contribute to the ongoing drive to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching further.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and know what needs to be done to continue to move the school forward. Development plans are well focused on the correct priorities and clearly identify the actions that need to be taken to bring improvements about. Pupils' progress tracking systems are now more detailed and enable leaders to identify pupils at risk of underachieving.
- The curriculum brings subjects together into interesting and engaging topics. Working with other schools in the local area, staff have planned for and introduced the new National Curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Staff and pupils are also rightly proud of the school choir.
- The social communication inclusion base is led effectively. Staff work as a team and know the pupils well. As a result, pupils' individual needs are met well and some regularly attend the mainstream classes with other pupils.
- Senior leaders check regularly on the quality of teaching and ensure that training and support for staff is provided quickly. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. Middle leaders have yet to participate fully in this aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders use the primary school sport funding well to enhance sports provision. It has been used to increase the range of sports activities available to pupils during and after school, to provide pupils with the opportunity to be coached by a sports specialist and to offer training to develop teachers' expertise. As a result, pupils are able to increase their sporting skills and participate more regularly in a variety of sporting activities.
- Most respondents to Parent View and parents who spoke with inspectors said that their children were happy at school and felt safe. The majority of respondents to Parent View indicated that they would not recommend the school to other parents. However, this view was not supported by the vast majority of parents who spoke with inspectors during the inspection. A number of parents did express concern about how well school leaders keep them informed. Parents want to know more about how they can help their children's learning and to be more up-to-date with the events taking place at the school. The inspectors agree with parents' concerns about the school's communication with them. Senior leaders and governors are taking prompt steps to improve things quickly.
- All staff that completed the staff questionnaire were extremely supportive of the school's leadership.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and are managed effectively. The knowledge and skills of staff are kept up-to-date through regular training.
- The local authority has undertaken regular reviews of the school's work since the last inspection. The school values the range of support provided.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the last inspection, membership of the governing body has remained stable and governors are supportive of the school and committed to its success. Governors have taken a very proactive approach in developing their skills and expertise and have sought the guidance of a national leader of governance. As a result, governors now have a secure understanding of their role and carry it out diligently.

- Senior leaders have worked with governors to provide a range of information which provides a sharp view of the school. The governing body receives regular information about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching. In addition, governors gain accurate first-hand views of the school through regular visits, the outcomes of which are shared with all members of the governing body. For example, a recent visit was to observe the work of the senior leaders when they were checking on the quality of teaching. Minutes of governing body meetings indicate that governors challenge senior leaders robustly.
- Governors ensure that the headteacher's and teachers' performance and salary progression are linked to the achievement of pupils in their care. They have a clear understanding of the school's finances, including the pupil premium funding and are aware of the impact of this funding on reducing the gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have worked with the headteacher to tackle the amount of staff absence experienced since the last inspection. Difficult decisions have been taken to resolve this situation and the headteacher and governors are monitoring all aspects of staff performance robustly.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are kind to each other and are happy, interested learners. They behave well in class and around school.
- School rules are understood by all and pupils think they are applied fairly by the adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They are aware of the different types of bullying and say that incidents do not happen often. If incidents do occur, pupils trust the staff to take steps to sort it out quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of risk and are supported well by the school's input on personal and internet safety.
- The school council is becoming increasingly active in giving pupils a say in school matters.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to work together in class. They are keen to share their ideas with each other and listen carefully when others are speaking.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now broadly in line with the national average. The home school link officer works with parents and their children to develop good attendance habits. As a result, the small group of pupils who find it difficult to attend school regularly is reducing.
- The majority of responses to Parent View were positive about the behaviour of pupils and parents who spoke with inspectors said that children enjoy school, behave well and feel safe.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not yet good enough to consistently address the small amount of underachievement arising from the legacy of weak teaching and disruption to learning in some classes caused by staff absence.
- In current classes, progress is also slower when too little is expected of pupils and tasks are too easy and do not challenge pupils' thinking well enough.
- Evidence shows that there are too few opportunities provided in mathematics lessons for pupils to apply reasoning and use their mathematical skills and understanding to solve problems.
- Pupils' books show that the quality of marking and feedback has improved overall, but is not yet consistently strong across the school. Where marking is most effective, comments ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Clear guidance is provided to ensure that grammatical and spelling errors are picked up quickly and time is provided to enable pupils to make any corrections necessary and respond to comments to improve their work.
- Some pupils and their parents say that last year they did not always know when to expect homework to be set. Also, they could not always see how the homework was linked to their learning in class and on occasion, work done at home was not marked. This prevented pupils making any improvements necessary and build on learning done at home with their parents.
- Teaching assistants, including those in the social communication inclusion base, are highly effective in delivering focused support for pupils' learning. They question pupils carefully, encouraging them to stay motivated and to think about their learning and the answers they give.
- Classrooms are orderly and attractive. Relationships are supportive and warm. The use of praise is a

strong feature in lessons and in the inclusion base. Pupils say that things have improved and that teachers now make lessons more interesting. They enjoy the way teachers arrange learning in topics and use a range of resources to help them learn. As a result, pupils are keen to do well, say they enjoy school and feel confident to tackle new learning.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement still requires improvement because although by the end of Year 6, most pupils now make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics, too few consistently do better than this in writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach the standards expected for their age in reading and writing, however, in 2014 standards in mathematics dipped to below average.
- Standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to the national average, however, standards in mathematics remain below average. Too few pupils consistently reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Some variations in the progress of current learners link to the staff turbulence experienced in recent years. This has resulted in gaps in learning for some pupils. Leaders and staff are working hard to address these issues and inspection evidence, including lesson observations, work in pupils' books and a review of the school's records and assessment data, show that the progress of current learners is improving. It is less rapid, however, when the work set is not hard enough, for example, for some Year 3 and Year 4 pupils in the last academic year.
- The most able pupils are starting to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics but this is not yet consistent across all classes. Occasionally, the work set is not sufficiently demanding and does not challenge pupils to reason and think deeply enough for themselves and to consistently produce the amount of work of which they are capable.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those who access the social communication inclusion base, achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting points, often making good progress as a result of the good provision for them.
- The pupil premium funding is helping to close the gaps between pupils eligible for this funding and others in the school. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is now broadly in line with other pupils in the school and close to other pupils nationally.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the average standard in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is generally above average. The proportion reaching the standard in the last academic year, although remaining close to national expectations, is lower than in previous years because a higher proportion of pupils in the year group entered the school with communication skills that were below that typically seen. These pupils are receiving extra help to support their speech and language development.
- School data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils are treated equally. The majority of current pupils are now working at the standards expected for their age and more are attaining the higher standards, particularly in reading and writing. Faster progress is being made and pupils are being helped to overcome any underachievement experienced previously. This is because teaching is getting better.

### The early years provision

### is good

- Children join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age, however, this can vary from year-to-year.
- Children make good progress throughout their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion reaching a good level of development is higher than the national average and pupils are well prepared to join Year 1.
- Children with special educational needs make the same good progress from their starting points as other children because of well-planned provision which is sensitive to the needs of all. Key workers quickly get to know children well and communicate regularly with parents to ensure that any additional needs are met.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Because of the warm relationships that exist, children settle well and quickly become used to classroom routines. Teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and skilfully enable them to learn. As a result, children play happily and confidently together.

- The leadership of the early years provision is good. The new acting leader of the early years took up her post in September 2014 and has hit the ground running, taking over from the headteacher who, due to staff changes, led the early years provision effectively in the latter part of the last academic year.
- The early years curriculum meets children’s needs well. It is well planned and frequently adapted as a result of on-going observations of children’s progress and interests. Children’s learning is extended well through imaginative play.
- Parents are happy with the way the school helps their children settle into life in school. Systems for parents to contribute to the assessments about how well their children are doing are in place and parents say that the staff keep them well-informed.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105007
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	442320

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stacey Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 334 1406
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