

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Woodlands Primary School

Higham School Lane, Hunt Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4BB

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

Woodlands Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that places great importance on pupils' enjoyment and happiness. It has the best interests of pupils at the heart of everything it does. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Pupils feel safe in school. They know that staff will always listen to them and help them. From the moment pupils start at the school, they are encouraged to be 'respectful, responsible and resilient'. This helps pupils thrive academically, socially and emotionally.

Staff know pupils well. They are ambitious for what pupils can achieve in all areas of school life. Pupils reflect this ambition through their positive attitudes as they 'learn, explore and grow together'. The school helps pupils understand the importance of positive behaviour. Pupils are sensitively supported to understand how they are feeling. Pupils learn about the impact of their behaviour on themselves and others around them. This helps them to become better at making the right behaviour choices.

Pupils are keen to take on opportunities that develop their leadership skills, talents and interests. They enjoy taking part in sports competitions. Leadership responsibilities include eco council, librarians, school council and house captains. Playtime buddies help the younger pupils to play games at lunchtimes. This means that pupils are never left out.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has taken decisive actions to ensure that pupils achieve well. The carefully designed curriculum builds pupils' knowledge and skills in each subject. It is aspirational and sets out exactly what pupils should learn, and in which order. The school has high

expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school implements robust systems to identify the exact needs of pupils with SEND. This helps staff to ensure that the provision is right for these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND learn confidently alongside their classmates.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. This ensures that they implement the curriculum expertly. The school ensures that the curriculum is engaging and fun. In the outdoor learning environment, children in Reception explore how water travels down pipes at different angles. In science, older pupils investigate what causes condensation to form by breathing on cold mirrors. These experiences help pupils to remember knowledge and explain their learning with a secure depth of understanding.

Reading is prioritised. It is a strength of the school. The school develops pupils' love of reading by providing them with a wide range of interesting books to choose from. Pupils especially appreciate their newly updated school library. Staff teach phonics skilfully and systematically. Children in Reception learn how to use sounds to build words. Staff carefully select books that include the sounds that pupils have been taught in phonics lessons. If pupils begin to fall behind, this is identified quickly. Targeted intervention is put in place to help pupils catch up. This helps most pupils develop their phonics knowledge and become fluent and confident readers.

Pupils who are at the early stages of writing do not always practise writing the sounds they have been taught in phonics. These pupils are sometimes asked to complete more advanced writing tasks before they have secured basic writing skills. Teachers do not always correct simple spelling or handwriting errors. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge grow, slowing their progress in writing. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development. Improvement work is already underway to ensure the development of pupils' early writing is focused and precise.

The school works tirelessly to improve pupils' attendance. They know the importance of pupils attending school regularly. The schools' work has been successful for many pupils. Rates of attendance are now similar to that seen nationally. However, there are still too many pupils who are persistently absent. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. The school knows that it must continue to work with pupils and families to secure high attendance for all pupils.

Pupils reflect the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct. They have highly positive attitudes to learning. If pupils struggle with controlling their behaviour, the school puts the right pastoral support in place to help them. Pupils appreciate this. Pupils show respect for each other and staff.

There is a strong personal development offer for pupils at this school. A well-considered personal, social, health and economic curriculum builds in an age-appropriate way. Pupils are taught about how to form healthy relationships and how to keep themselves safe, including online. The school promotes culture and diversity through the 'Big Ideas'. This ensures that, throughout the curriculum, pupils learn and understand about the wider world. Pupils know that everyone is different, and this is celebrated. One pupil, reflecting

the views of many, said, 'It doesn't matter if we are different, we are all human, so we are all special and important'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 are not given sufficient opportunities to secure the fundamentals of writing. Teachers do not routinely correct handwriting, spelling and grammar errors. As a result, these pupils find it hard to write accurately, which slows their progress. The school should ensure that newly introduced changes to early writing are quickly embedded so that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in writing.
- The school's work to reduce persistent absence is not yet as effective as it could be. While there are some signs of improvement, absence for disadvantaged pupils remains too high. The school should evaluate what is working well and further develop its procedures to remove the barriers that prevent some disadvantaged pupils from attending school regularly.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142834
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341805
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lark Snow
Headteacher	Vicki Lonie
Website	www.woodlands.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and extended leadership team, including leaders responsible for SEND, pastoral development and safeguarding.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils reading, visited phonics and reading lessons and spoke to pupils about their reading opportunities in school.

- The inspector held discussions with governors and met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Luisa Gould, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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