

Inspection of a good school: Woodsetton School

Tipton Road, Woodsetton, Dudley, West Midlands, DY3 1BY

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 December 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Woodsetton school makes a big difference to the lives of pupils and their families. The school motto 'happy hearts, happy minds' is at the centre of everything the school does. Staff focus on building relationships with pupils. These strong relationships help pupils develop the skills and attitudes they need to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils often start school without the language or communication strategies to tell adults what they want and need. Sometimes pupils show their frustration through challenging behaviours. Staff are skilled at getting to know pupils and their needs. They persevere and adapt their approaches until they find ways of helping the pupil to learn. Parents told inspectors that the staff go above and beyond to meet the needs of their children. Some said that the school is like one big family.

Woodsetton helps pupils to know how to behave. Staff celebrate good behaviour, and pupils love the praise and prizes they get. The school has a very strong approach to anti-bullying. The headteacher investigates any concerns that pupils or parents have about bullying. Pupils and staff agree that the school acts quickly to deal with any bullying incidents.

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

The headteacher and her new leadership team have identified that the needs of pupils coming to the school have changed over time, and continue to do so. Currently, the curriculum is not well planned and, in particular, does not always meet the needs of the newest pupils. Leaders and governors understand what they need to improve and are in the process of making changes.

The leaders' aim for the curriculum is to make sure pupils have the skills they need for the next stage in learning. Leaders have developed broad overviews for English, mathematics, and a range of topics. However, leaders have not set out the curriculum content and

knowledge that will be taught. Leaders are not working closely enough with the national curriculum or the early years foundation stage curriculum to ensure that they are ambitious about the outcomes for pupils.

Leaders and staff know that they do not currently have enough knowledge about how best to meet the needs of some of their newer pupils, who are mainly in Reception and key stage 1. As a result, the curriculum for these pupils is not well structured enough and does not set out the knowledge and skills they need to build up over time. Leaders have begun to ask for help from external partners. They have started to introduce some specific teaching approaches to help pupils to access the curriculum. However, the use of these approaches is still at an early stage.

The school has introduced a range of ways to help pupils communicate better. Visual symbols help children in the Reception class to communicate their needs. Some older pupils learn how to communicate according to the people they are with and the situation they are in. For example, some pupils have made formal presentations to the governing body. However, it is not always clear what strategy is in place to help a pupil communicate. As a result, staff do not always support pupils, particularly those with the most complex needs, in developing these important communication skills.

Leaders have prioritised reading as part of the curriculum because they want all pupils to develop a love of books. Leaders want as many pupils as possible to learn to read. They ensure that pupils have a wide range of age-appropriate texts. They expect teachers to read to and listen to pupils read regularly. Leaders check that teachers teach phonics as soon as pupils are ready to learn it. However, reading books do not always match the phonics pupils are learning. Leaders know this and are in the process of identifying a new phonics scheme for the school and training for staff.

Exciting outside play areas and vibrant classrooms help pupils to be interested in learning. In the Reception class, equipment encourages pupils to use their senses to explore and play. As pupils get older, resources change to meet their needs and interests.

Leaders are passionate about the importance of pupils accessing their community. Through carefully planned weekly focuses and trips, the school helps pupils prepare for life in modern Britain. Pupils love looking back at the class books that record these weekly focuses and trips.

Staff and pupil anti-bullying ambassadors have an important role in the school. They make decisions about how to help pupils learn to respect and tolerate others. Recently, the ambassadors purchased items for care boxes in each classroom. These boxes have resources that encourage cooperation and calming play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know their pupils exceptionally well and, because of this, they are quick to identify and help those pupils and families who need it. Leaders check that this support is helping families, and if not they find other alternatives.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Leaders carefully consider the training needs of staff and governors and create training opportunities to support them. Because of this

training, staff and governors know their responsibilities and ask for information and help if they need it. The staff team knows how to report concerns, and they do.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not well enough planned or structured. Leaders have some good ideas of how to improve the curriculum, but they have not yet implemented these ideas. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious for all groups of pupils. They need to make sure that it is clearly planned, defining the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn over time, and in what order.
- When pupils begin school, staff use assessments to identify pupils' communication needs. However, leaders and teachers do not quickly identify the exact communication support strategy that a pupil needs. They do not ensure that this communication strategy is consistently used throughout the day. Leaders need to train staff so that they have the skills and knowledge to develop pupils' communication, and make sure that agreed communication strategies are used consistently by all staff.
- Over the last few years, the school has admitted pupils with more complex needs. Although leaders have begun to introduce new teaching strategies, staff are not consistently using these to help pupils learn. Leaders need to ensure that all staff, including support staff, are skilled in using suitable teaching strategies to support all pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2013.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103879
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10205157
Type of school	Primary special school
School category	Maintained special school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Mr L Butler
Headteacher	Mrs K Beer
Website	http://www.woodsetton.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher took up her post in November 2019, followed by two new deputy headteachers in September 2021.
- Over the last few years, the needs of the pupils who attend the school have changed. The younger pupils tend to have more complex learning difficulties.
- There have been some changes to the governing body since 2016.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors focused on the following subjects: reading, English and mathematics. They visited lessons in these subjects, looked at pupils' work, examined leaders' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are taught. Inspectors also looked at the topic-based curriculum to evaluate how it is planned and taught.

- Inspectors asked pupils, staff, leaders, governors, parents, the school improvement partner and the local authority about safeguarding arrangements. They examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. They also found out about safety procedures and routines.
- Inspectors observed the start of the day and informal times of the day, to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, teachers, the local authority, the school improvement partner and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers and staff to gather general information about school life.

Inspection team

Amanda Clugston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Ashley

Ofsted Inspector

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