

Willingdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114422
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378859
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2012
Lead inspector	Lindsey Diamond

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	428
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Fitzpatrick
Headteacher	Judith Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lindsey Diamond

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

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Desmond Dunne

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by three additional inspectors. The team observed 21 lessons, taught by 16 teachers, adding up to over 10 hours of teaching time. Assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes were also observed. Meetings were held with two governors and senior and middle managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's data on attainment, learning and progress for all year groups. The school development plan, self-evaluation documentation and lesson plans were also scrutinised. The inspection team analysed 121 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, to whom they talked informally also. Additionally, 98 questionnaires completed by pupils and 51 completed by staff were analysed.

Information about the school

Willingdon is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils attend from the immediate area. Children join the two Reception classes from a range of pre-school provision, a significant number coming from the privately run provision that shares the school site. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly below the national average. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. The percentage of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school has a Hearing Support Facility, which currently caters for seven pupils. It is run by the governing body and was included as part of this inspection. The school meets the current floor standards. Willingdon Primary is a 'dyslexia friendly' school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher sets high expectations and has a clear view of what is needed for improvement. As a result, standards are being raised and communication skills are good. However, there are still some year groups where progress is not consistent, especially towards the younger end of the school. The school recognises that the quality of teaching in those classes does not always enable pupils to make progress at an accelerated rate. In addition, the role of middle leaders is not yet fully developed, in order to enable them to monitor and check the quality of learning effectively enough.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning. Attendance and punctuality are above the national average. Some parents, carers and pupils expressed concerns about behaviour, although evidence showed it was satisfactory overall. Occasionally, when the pace of teaching slackens, pupils' attention wanders. In those lessons, learning lacks consistency. Pupils produce their best work when encouraged to complete tasks independently and think for themselves. The skills necessary to accomplish this are not taught consistently across the school.
- The school caters increasingly well for its lower-ability learners, including those with disabilities or special educational needs. Recent improvements in the Hearing Support Facility mean that these pupils make good progress compared with their peers nationally. There is less support for the most able, who make a little less progress than their peer group nationally.
- Assessment systems are developing to identify and support underachievement. Usually, pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve, but the quality of marking is variable throughout the school. Teachers do not always use this assessment information to best effect in lesson planning in order to match tasks to individual pupils' needs.
- A clear trend of sustained improvement over the last three years, combined with the clear, shared commitment from the school leadership, staff and the governing body to enhance learner opportunity, provides clear evidence that the school has secure capacity to improve.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring rigorous and extensive monitoring of the quality of teaching and its direct impact on learning and progress
 - ensuring the curriculum is targeted sufficiently to meet the needs of all learners, especially the most able
 - developing the accountability of middle leaders and teachers as leaders of learning in their role as drivers of school improvement.

- Raise attainment and enhance progress, especially of higher-ability pupils, by July 2012, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use daily assessments, including marking, more effectively and consistently so that all pupils are fully guided and engaged in developing their skills, especially in Reception Year and Years 1 and 2
 - ensuring that all lesson planning takes account of the specific learning needs of the higher-ability learner
 - ensuring the pace of teaching allows for sufficient learning to take place in each session and over time.

- Set up systems to engage more effectively with parents and carers so that they are fully aware of the school's progress to date, especially in areas where they express some concern, such as behaviour and safety of pupils.

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Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment and the progress that they make have improved markedly since the previous inspection when both were significantly below national outcomes. Attainment is now in line with national expectations and progress is satisfactory. Within this, there remains some lack of consistency between classes and groups of learners, with least progress being made by the most able and those in Reception Year and Key Stage 1. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. Some good examples of this were seen during the inspection, including when Year 5 pupils were encouraged to challenge themselves with differentiated tasks around the concept of reflective symmetry. Most pupils in the lesson were prepared to 'take a risk', as one boy put it, and, as a result, learning was developed at a good pace. The progress of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is especially true for those learners based within the Hearing Support Facility. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are very positive about the pace of learning for their children, one reflecting that their child 'has truly advanced...in every area of development'.

Pupils develop the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Pupils have good communication skills and are able to apply them well in a range of situations to support learning, in negotiating with their peers and in discussions with adults beyond the classroom. The school has recently focused on improving outcomes in writing and, as a result, writing has improved significantly. This was seen clearly in classrooms, for example in a Year 6 writing lesson, when pupils were skilled at converting narrative text into a play script. The school is now making the same concerted effort with reading and, as a result, standards are consistently improving. Inspectors heard pupils read in all key stages and confirmed that pupils are now working in line with national expectations. The majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's achievement and their comments reflect evidence seen by inspectors.

Quality of teaching

Most of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires believed their children were taught well. Underpinned by a sound planned curriculum, teaching is satisfactory, although some good teaching was seen during the inspection, both in the main school and in the Hearing Support Facility. Generally, teachers engage learners and ensure that they make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. Good use is made of the teaching of communication skills in most lessons and pupils work well together throughout the school. Likewise, the teaching of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum is woven into lessons well. In the best lessons seen, teachers had high expectations of learners and pushed them to achieve as much as they could. When they are available, they use

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other adults as an effective tool to support learning. However, this practice is not yet consistent across all classes and year groups. In the lessons observed, learning was most effective when the teachers ensured clear differentiation of activities to suit the learning needs of pupils and moved learning on at a good pace to ensure that pupils remained engaged and focused. When this happened, progress was good. Likewise, in a Year 3 creative writing intervention group, the teacher had prepared well-targeted resources for the very specific needs of the pupils and targeted questions appropriately to sustain concentration and move learning on.

It was evident during the inspection that, generally, teachers have a clear understanding of the standards that individual pupils are working at. However, the accurate assessments are not used sufficiently well to inform planning for learning so that, occasionally, learning tasks set are not targeted sufficiently to meet individual pupils' needs. This is especially true of the most-able learners and younger pupils. A new system of individual learning targets has been put in place, which learners have access to, but the targets do not always challenge sufficiently and a range of different systems throughout the school means that often pupils need to engage in a new system whenever they change classes. Marking is used very positively as a tool to move learning on in some classes, but this practice remains variable throughout the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The inspection team investigated this area in some detail after some concerns had been raised by some parents and carers via the inspection questionnaire; staff, parents, carers and pupils were consulted. As a result of these investigations, most responses were positive, although a minority of pupils expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying. During the inspection, pupils were typically polite and courteous and engaged well in learning. They became less focused when the quality of teaching declined, although learners always conducted themselves in line with the generally high teacher expectations. Playground injuries are dealt with appropriately by staff. Although there is some evidence of historical problems with inappropriate behaviour and bullying, both within and beyond lessons, the school has established appropriate systems and structures to deal with these. These new systems rely on early intervention and parental involvement. School records show that they are having positive impact on individual pupils' behaviour. This was backed up by inspection evidence trails that observed pupils in lessons and at playtime. No inappropriate behaviour was seen. No pupils questioned were able to give examples from the current academic year about bullying, although a few recognised that it had been an issue in the past. Attendance and punctuality are above average. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of the risks associated with, for example, substance misuse and the use of new technology.

Leadership and management

The headteacher demonstrates an ambitious vision for Willingdon Primary and has worked well with staff and the governing body to ensure the effective running of the

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school and better outcomes for learners. The headteacher has remained focused on school improvement and, since her appointment less than three years ago, has improved the school from most areas of achievement being significantly below all schools nationally to producing results that are broadly in line with all schools. This has been undertaken through a continued focus on improving the quality of teaching. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily by leaders and the governing body. Systems for measuring learning are now in place and their impact on improving progress is beginning to be seen in all year groups and for most groups of pupils, but especially in Key Stage 2. School leaders recognise that, in order to ensure that the systems are used effectively and that all learners are given equality of opportunity in their learning, middle managers must now take a more active role as leaders of learning. A clear vision for the future, combined with the progress made to date and strategic, time-referenced, well-targeted action plans, show clear capacity to improve. Wherever school leaders have targeted areas in their school improvement plan to date, for example, the management of behaviour or the improvement in standards in writing, good progress can be seen.

The curriculum is generally matched well to the needs of most learners, although for the most able and for some younger pupils, it is not always focused sufficiently on individual needs. Staff members recognise and value the efforts that are being made to support their professional development. As one teacher said, reflecting the views of many, 'the school has improved amazingly well since I started', while another noted the 'vibrant learning atmosphere'. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is well promoted and permeates through all aspects of the curriculum, ensuring that pupils are appropriately prepared for life in a modern United Kingdom. Generally, the school works well with parents and carers, although it recognises that it still has more work to do in ensuring that it shares improvements in key areas, such as behaviour, so that historical issues do not remain a concern for parents and carers. The school meets all statutory safeguarding requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willingdon Primary School, Willingdon, BN20 9RJ

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and observing the lessons, assemblies, lunchtimes and play times. Also, we read your opinions carefully, put forward in the pupil questionnaires. We found that your school is satisfactory and that your headteacher and other leaders are determined to make it better.

These are the things we found that your school does well.

- The headteacher, staff and governing body are very clear about how they want to improve your school.
- Those of you who experience difficulty learning are doing increasingly well because you get lots of support.
- The curriculum is interesting and fun and is targeted well to suit most of your learning needs.
- Communication skills are taught well and you use them effectively to support your learning.
- The school has good systems in place to keep you safe and has dealt well with the behaviour problems of the past.

We believe the headteacher and teachers can make your school better. We have asked them to do some important things.

- Make sure the people who lead and manage the school all work together to find out how well teachers teach by observing them teaching in lessons.
- Make sure that all of you, especially those of you who are the most able, are given the support you need to make good progress in your learning.
- Ensure that your parents and carers are aware of the progress that the school is making, especially in important areas such as improving behaviour.

You can help with these by making sure that your teacher understands when your tasks are too easy or too hard and by telling adults in school if there are still any concerns that you have about behaviour. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lindsey Diamond
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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