

Willaston CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111245
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378260
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2012
Lead inspector	Denise Shields

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Dennison
Headteacher	Julie Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Denise Shields
Chris Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers teaching 17 lessons or part-lessons. The inspectors listened to pupils from a range of different ages and abilities read. Meetings were held with parents and carers, five groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and school staff, including 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 a number of documents, including the school's strategic development plan, safeguarding documentation and minutes of the governing body meetings. Also, they analysed 88 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller- than- average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low compared to the national average. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school has achieved Investors in People and Healthy School status and holds a number of awards, including the Inclusion Quality Mark and Artsmark gold awards. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staff changes in Key Stage 1 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in May 2011

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Willaston is a good school. Its main strengths are: in Key Stage 2 teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice, the curriculum is rich and varied and attendance is consistently high. Leaders acknowledge the school’s overall effectiveness is not outstanding, as they are striving for, because there is still more to do. In Key Stage 1, progress, although satisfactory overall, is uneven because teachers’ expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Furthermore, whilst priorities for improvement are clearly set out in the school development plan, success criteria are not defined sharply enough, and this reduces leaders’ ability to assess the impact of their actions.
- Since the last inspection, attainment has risen steadily and is above average in English and mathematics. Far more pupils than is expected attain the higher levels in these subjects. As a result, from their typically average starting points when they join the Reception class, achievement for all groups of pupils is good.
- In Key Stage 2, teachers regularly provide interesting and engaging lessons that stimulate pupils’ imaginations. This enables pupils to learn new concepts and skills quickly. Their progress is never less than good and is sometimes rapid. Pupils’ learning and progress is not as strong in Key Stage 1, because teaching is not always as secure as in the rest of the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school, a view endorsed by almost all parents and carers. Pupils’ behaviour is good; they are considerate of others. Older pupils frequently act as buddies to younger ones, enhancing the school’s supportive ‘family’ ethos.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are effective. Priorities for action, based on a robust evaluation of the school’s performance have been successfully tackled. Improvement has been strong. Leaders have successfully led improvements in the quality of teaching and have enhanced the curriculum, which is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In Key Stage 1, increase the rate of progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and precisely tailor tasks to pupils' needs and abilities
 - the programme to teach the sounds letters make (phonics) is taught more effectively and guided reading sessions are more sharply-focused on the next steps in each pupil's learning
 - pupils have more opportunities to practise their writing and mathematical skills in a wide range of contexts
 - pupils develop skills as independent learners, for example, by providing opportunities for them to learn through play.

- Define precise success criteria in the school development plan, so that the impact of actions taken can be measured accurately to promote a clearer overview of the school's performance.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Reception class happily join in activities, learn to share resources and listen to the views of others. Their knowledge of the sounds made by letters develops well and they gain an enjoyment of books and reading. Children make good progress across all areas of learning and achieve well. Progress for all groups of pupils through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory rather than good, because the quality of teaching is variable and planned work is not always closely enough matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Also, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and improve their writing and mathematical skills in a wide range of situations to enable them to make greater progress. In Key Stage 2, progress accelerates and all groups of pupils make better progress than that of their peers nationally. This is because teachers consistently have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in English and mathematics and many more pupils than average attain the higher levels in these subjects. Pupils' achievement, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, is good.

All pupils read regularly to an adult in school; individual pupils' records show that the vast majority also read to their parents or carers at home. Pupils comment that they enjoy reading and there is a good range of interesting books to choose from. Throughout the school, basic reading strategies and skills are taught well, generally. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. By the time they leave Year 6 it is above average and many more pupils than average attain the higher levels.

Throughout the school pupils enjoy learning, especially when activities are practical. In Key Stage 2, most pupils try their best at all times and concentrate well. Almost all work well with a partner or in groups; this is helping them to become confident and independent learners. Many develop good co-operation skills. This was apparent in a music lesson for the oldest pupils; showing a good understanding, groups discussed the key features of 'rap' music. They worked together successfully to devise and then perform confidently, in front of their peers, their own 'rap' song based on the nursery rhyme 'baa baa black sheep'. In Key Stage 1, when activities capture their interest pupils concentrate well and apply themselves to their work diligently. For instance, when a group of Year 2 pupils were asked to consider and then write about what their perfect bedroom would be like; the task captured their imagination and their learning and progress was good. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 sometimes lack the confidence to tackle new and unfamiliar tasks. Their skills as independent learners are not developed well enough, because they have too few chances to practise these skills, for example, to learn through play, to explore their own ideas and work constructively together.

Most parents and carers express the view that their children make good progress and the school meets their child's particular needs. Inspectors endorse these positive views. Effective, targeted support in reading, writing and mathematics, for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs enables them to make progress that is often better than that of their peers nationally.

Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers are of the view that teaching is good. This is a view with which inspectors concur in respect of its overall quality. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, as a result of good teaching and guidance that is tailored well to individuals needs, children make good progress and enjoy learning. Throughout the school relationships are strong so pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they should need it. Curriculum-planning often contributes well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 6, for example, pupils had been reading 'The Three Little Pigs' by Roald Dahl. In groups, different viewpoints were discussed and considered, for instance, why the wolf ate the pigs, what the wolf could have done differently, how did the three pigs feel? Pupils showed mature understanding of the text and empathy for the characters and they listened very well to each other's ideas.

Reading skills are taught well overall. Practice is more effective in Key Stage 2, where well-structured guided reading sessions are giving pupils the tools they need to swiftly move their learning forward. Here too teachers also have clear enunciation and this aids pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make. In Key Stage 1, at times the balance between whole-class, group and individual phonic work (the sounds that letters make) is not always suitable. Occasionally, the focus of guided reading sessions is too broad. On these occasions, pupils' progress is slower.

In almost all lessons new technology is used effectively to engage pupils and extend their knowledge. Pupils comment that they enjoy using the laptops, i-pads and digital cameras, and say that these aid their learning. In the best lessons, teachers explain new concepts exceptionally well and are skilled at consolidating pupils' new learning

quickly, and effectively, through the use of well-chosen activities. Opportunities for pupils to talk in pairs and to share their ideas successfully promote speaking, listening and co-operation. However, in Key Stage 1, although lessons are usually pitched at different levels, there are occasions when teachers' expectations are not high enough and activities are not always precisely enough matched to pupils' needs and abilities to consistently build on their previous learning. In all classes, teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Children in the Reception class form strong relationships with adults, consequently they settle quickly to school routines. They play happily together, behave well and most are keen to help and support each other. Pupils' behaviour is typically nearly always good in lessons, around the school and during playtime. During school assemblies it is often exemplary. In discussions with different groups of pupils they indicate that behaviour over time is almost always good and their learning and progress in lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils understand and accept the need for rules because their views are sought when these are drawn up.

In discussions and in the responses to the pupils' questionnaire, almost all pupils express the view that they feel safe in school and there is an adult they can turn to for help if required. In conversation with an inspector, pupils remarked that they appreciate and value the 'chill tank' where they can seek guidance from an adult or a 'peer buddy' if they are sad or troubled. Almost all pupils help and encourage each other. They show a sensitive awareness of the individual needs of their peers who have disabilities and those with special educational needs. All adults are seen to be fair and consistent by pupils in their management of behaviour. Pupils understand different types of bullying and assert that bullying is very rare and that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly and constructively. The vast majority of parents and carers reflect the inspection findings with their view that behaviour is typically good and any unacceptable behaviour is managed effectively.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear leadership. She is supported well by staff at all levels who contribute effectively to helping drive improvement. A regular cycle to monitor and evaluate the work of the school is robust and well-established. It is used effectively to set key priorities for raising attainment and promoting pupils' learning and progress, although success criteria for measuring how well the school is doing are not sufficiently precise. Professional development is closely aligned to school priorities and staff's own professional interests. Coaching and mentoring programmes for teachers are well-established; these are key factors in securing improvements in teaching and learning. The actively-involved and well-informed governing body holds the school to account. Members monitor the quality of provision regularly. The areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. All of these factors mean that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively and tackles discrimination well by narrowing gaps in learning and ensuring that the school is a harmonious and tolerant community. Careful attention is given, not just to individual pupils who might be in danger of falling behind their targets, but also to provide the support required to improve the achievement of particular groups. The curriculum is good, albeit stronger in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. This is because subjects are brought together in topics and themes that are interesting for pupils. Events such as assemblies, the wide range of trips and visitors contribute greatly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are gaining valuable cultural insights through residential visits organised for pupils in Years 2 to 6.

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.
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.



29 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willaston C of E Primary School, Neston, CH64 2TN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. We found that Willaston is a good school. These are the things we found to be strengths.

- Your behaviour is good and you are all friendly towards each other. You told us that you feel safe, there is always an adult to turn to if you are unhappy or sad and that you are confident that very occasional instances of bullying, of any form, are dealt with swiftly.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class; they enjoy learning and achieve well.
- By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment in English and mathematics is above average and far more of you attain the higher levels in these subjects than pupils in most schools.
- Those of you who find learning difficult and those of you who have additional needs are given effective support so that you make similar progress to that of your class friends.
- Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body know the school well and they are good at finding ways to make your school even better.

These are some things we think will help your school to improve further. In Key Stage 1, your learning is uneven. We have asked your school to make sure your teachers set work that is always just at the right level to help you learn more quickly and to give you lots of chances to practise your reading, writing, and mathematical skills. We have asked your school to improve the big plan that they make for the school each year, by putting more details in it about how they are going to measure how well the school is doing.

You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields
Lead Inspector

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