

Willington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114066
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378790
Inspection dates	28–29 May 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Olwyn Gunn
Headteacher	Stephen Cornforth
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts

John Pattinson

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons taught by nine class teachers. They also observed intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. Inspectors checked pupils' reading across the age range. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the designated local authority school improvement adviser. The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, records of behaviour and safeguarding. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 129 parents and carers, 60 pupils and nine staff.

Information about the school

Willington is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with none at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. More than twice the average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club each day. The school has achieved the Eco-Schools and International School awards. It is also working towards the Rights Respecting School award. A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed at the start of the academic year and a new deputy headteacher in January 2012.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Willington is a satisfactory school. It has made good progress in securing improvements, because strong leadership has established a positive and stimulating climate for learning. Parents and carers appreciate the high quality of care and support their children receive. Pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment is rising but the school is not yet good because it has yet to secure pupils' consistently good achievement or ensured an overall good quality of teaching. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children enter the Nursery class and settle quickly, happily and confidently making satisfactory progress in developing their skills. Across the school, pupils make satisfactory progress but improving progress overall. Their progress is accelerating because leaders have taken positive action to enrich the quality of the curriculum in order to raise attainment. This includes boys' better achievement in reading.
- Much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. Despite this, over time its impact has been satisfactory because challenge and pace in lessons have been inconsistent. Currently, some lessons do not fully exploit the much improved curricular opportunities.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. The happy, friendly family atmosphere promotes pupils' positive and frequently considerate attitudes, including in lessons. Any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with swiftly by the school. Attendance is improving and is now above average.
- The strong leadership team has made certain that this friendly community shares a common sense of purpose and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Many aspects of the school's work continue to improve. The deputy headteacher is effectively leading teaching and, as a result, the staff's performance and skills are increasingly well developed. A shrewdly led governing body holds the school to account in positive ways. Through effective self-evaluation senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and boost their achievement further by:
 - making certain that all activities are closely matched to pupils' varying needs
 - ensuring that tasks are thought-provoking and keep pupils engaged throughout lessons.

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that the good challenge, pace and variety increasingly evident in lessons becomes even more common practice
 - fully exploiting the stimulating curricular opportunities to enhance pupils' independent learning skills
 - increasing the opportunities for more creative learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - consistently providing pupils with well-defined steps to help them improve their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The positive action to enhance the richness of learning experiences is resulting in improvements in the rates of progress for all groups of pupils. The rigorous systems to check pupils' development demonstrate that inconsistencies in the patterns of progress are being successfully tackled, although progress is satisfactory over time. The needs of individual pupils are increasingly accurately identified, including those who need additional help, support and challenge. The school's strong focus on improving early reading and writing, strengthened with a widening range of first-hand experiences, is improving skills more consistently, especially for boys. For example, older pupils demonstrated considerable confidence, skills and enjoyment working alongside Royal Shakespeare Company artists performing the *'Merchant of Venice'* in a workshop session. In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils' enjoyment of learning was evident, especially when fun approaches were adopted that capture and hold their interest.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills which are well below those typical for their age. Their speech and language skills are often underdeveloped. Children make satisfactory progress working towards the skills expected of them for their age, although their progress in their early reading and writing is less strong. Although attainment by the end of Year 2 is currently below average, it is rising as pupils' progress accelerates. Historically, overall attainment in Year 6 has been below average but currently pupils' better progress means that in Year 6 they are on track to reach broadly expected standards for their age. However, despite recent improvements, achievement over time remains satisfactory. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve satisfactorily and their rate of progress is quickening as intervention and support are increasingly well targeted.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Positive action taken to improve the quality of the teaching of the relationships between letters and the sounds they make has helped to improve pupils' language and literacy skills. Younger pupils are increasingly confident and skilled in making sense of new words. In Year 6, much progress

is being made to foster pupils' enjoyment of reading and in enabling pupils to discuss their views more deeply about an author's style. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is broadly average.

Quality of teaching

Teachers enjoy excellent relationships with pupils as a consequence of the positive school ethos and the high expectations for pupils' engagement in their learning. Securely improving teaching is demanding more of pupils and, as a result, pupils are responding positively, especially in those lessons that are challenging and enjoyable. All parents and carers feel that their children are taught well. Increasingly thoughtful approaches, which capitalise on the improved range of curricular experiences, are stimulating and holding interest more effectively. Partner talk promotes much enjoyment and opportunities for pupils to consider their own ideas and views and think about those of their friends. This successfully promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Despite improvements, teaching is satisfactory because the impact of the initiatives implemented is not yet fully evident in a consistent pattern of good progress and achievement.

When progress is fastest, imaginative, fun approaches successfully engage the interest of pupils. Thought-provoking questioning which is well matched to individual abilities encourages pupils to explain their ideas and justify their thinking. For example, a group of boys were engrossed in creating a frequency table of letters and words from a newspaper article. Wider curricular opportunities enable pupils to apply and practise their skills in a range of subjects. However, at times these opportunities are not always fully exploited to build on pupils' prior learning or to fully promote their independent learning. Positive marking is helpful but does not consistently detail steps for improvement. When progress is slower, tasks are not always well matched to age, ability and needs and too much time is sometimes spent on the same task. Teachers' questioning does not always probe pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently to promote their consistently good progress. For example, in the Nursery and Reception classes not enough opportunities are provided for children to think creatively and work independently to pursue their curiosity both in and outdoors. Thoughtful use of progress information ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and make the same satisfactory overall progress as their peers.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good and is characterised by considerate, thoughtful and sensible attitudes. Along with their improving attendance, this adds to the strong moral and social ethos of the school. Pupils describe that any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, is very promptly dealt with by staff. Conversations with them show that they are knowledgeable about different types of bullying and that they are confident approaching any member of staff if they have a worry, concern or feel intimidated in any way. Pupils' trust and confidence in staff is evident throughout the day. At social times, pupils play together happily and demonstrate a clear grasp of the boundaries that are set for them. Pupils collaborate really well together in classroom activities and display confidence managing their own behaviour. Those potentially vulnerable pupils, including those that arrive at other than the normal times, benefit from well-focussed guidance and support.

Pupils' personal development is very well supported, with an interesting programme of first-hand experiences, including a residential experience for older pupils. The breakfast club

provides a calm, cheerful start to the day. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to acquire sporting, artistic and cultural experiences and skills through a wide range of interesting visits and visitors. For example, the Comenius project funded student to provide classroom support and to teach Spanish. Pupils report that they feel safe and all parents and carers agree. They talk confidently about how to stay safe and avoid danger, including when using new technology. The school and eco councils relish the opportunities to take responsibility and take pride in their actions improving facilities and the quality of their environment.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has maintained a firm focus on school improvement since the previous inspection. This is proving very effective. Ambition and desire for sustained improvement are shared amongst senior leaders and the whole staff. Staff are appreciative that their contributions are valued. They are reflective and respond readily and swiftly to feedback and professional development. The deputy headteacher has very quickly enhanced the established system of monitoring teaching and learning by using findings highly effectively and nurturing staff confidence and skills. The systematic checks on pupils' progress are quickly identifying any slips in progress and prompt corrective action is helping to promote improved teaching and greater consistency in the pattern of pupils' progress. The recently strengthened governing body is proactive in checking on the school's performance. The growing confidence of subject leaders is adding well to the drive for improvement. As a result there is a good capacity to secure and sustain further improvements.

Effective collaborative working, such as that with the shared Parent Support Adviser, adds to the drive for further improvement, for example, in effectively reducing persistent absence. The good curriculum provides pupils with varied, interesting and often rich learning experiences. This contributes well to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, there are occasions when experiences could be exploited even more to boost achievement and foster independent learning skills, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school enjoys excellent links with parents and carers and the local community. Almost all parents and carers welcome the improvements that have taken place in the school. The developing range of cultural experiences, for example, learning about the main character in the *Merchant of Venice*, promotes pupils' good understanding of the diverse world around them. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and strengthening, as the unevenness in the pattern of pupils' achievement and attainment is being successfully addressed. Any discrimination is tackled effectively. Safeguarding requirements are met with much good practice adopted.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



30 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willington Primary School, Crook, DL15 0EQ

We want to thank you all for the happy, friendly and polite welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. We thoroughly enjoyed our time talking to you.

Willington is a satisfactory and improving school. We were impressed with the excellent relationships your school has with your parents and carers and the way your staff encourage and support you to work hard. We were pleased by your good behaviour and the high-quality support that you receive. You describe how safe you feel and happy as a result. In discussions, it was obvious you take much pride in helping your school to improve and your contributions were impressive.

The headteacher and the governing body have taken positive action to ensure that the school has improved. This can be seen in your better progress and standards, including in boys' reading. We have asked the school to reduce further any variations in the rate of your progress. We have also asked your teachers to provide more activities which interest you, to test your thinking, knowledge and understanding and to encourage you to work independently. We would like them to share their best practice to make certain all of your activities are well-matched to your interests and needs. This includes the work set for younger children. We have also asked that your teachers' use of questions constantly checks and probes your thinking, and to ensure that no opportunities are missed to practise your reading, writing and number skills. Finally, we have asked that your teachers provide you with distinct steps for improvement, so that your skills are improved with every new piece of work.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts
Lead inspector

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