

Willesborough Infant School

Church Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0JZ

Inspection dates 17–18 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently good. Sometimes, lessons do not build well on pupils' previous attainment.
- Although progress is improving, pupils' achievement is uneven across the school, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Lower-attaining pupils do not always read every day to an adult which prevents them making faster progress.
- Outdoor play in the Early Years Foundation Stage is insufficiently challenging in mathematical development.
- The school is now improving but the pace of progress has not been fast enough since the previous inspection.
- Improvement planning is not sufficiently focused.
- Senior leaders do not ensure there are strong systems for staff to manage and improve English and mathematics achievement across the school.
- Curriculum planning for teaching writing and mathematics is not robust. This prevents teachers building securely on pupils' earlier learning.

The school has the following strengths

- There is some good teaching in every year group which is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Leaders have enabled teachers to use data to measure the effectiveness of their teaching on pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful, courteous and work well together.
- Governance is now good. Governors provide good challenge for school leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the deputy headteacher, and heard a sample of pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- Inspectors had discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, including the Chair, senior leaders, teachers and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 39 responses to the online Parent View survey and the few parents' letters.
- Inspectors considered responses to the 35 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Barbara Saltmarsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Willesborough Infants is an above-average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are White British, although nearly one fifth speak English as an additional language, which is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is average.
- The school received an Ofsted Interim Assessment on 15 March 2012, which deferred an inspection.
- The school has experienced some staffing changes in the past few years including significant changes to the teaching staff. Also, the headteacher was absent at the beginning of this academic year for about half a term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers plan and teach mathematics at the right level of difficulty so pupils make consistently good progress
 - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with constantly challenging learning opportunities when learning through play, especially in mathematics and ensuring they make balanced choices
 - ensuring teaching assistants are well deployed to maximise pupils' learning.
- Raise achievement and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - raising achievement in mathematical calculations in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the proportions reaching higher levels in writing and mathematics by Year 2
 - raising the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium
 - improving pupils' handwriting, their ability to use interesting vocabulary and lower-attaining pupils' ability to write in sentences
 - ensuring reading records show parents their children's reading targets, including in phonics where appropriate, and lower-attaining pupils being heard every day.
- Improve the leadership of teaching by:
 - ensuring senior leaders distribute leadership so that members of staff play a full part in leading and improving English and mathematics teaching across the whole school
 - developing whole-school curriculum planning for writing and mathematics to help teachers to teach the right steps in basic skills
 - clearly evaluating the impact of teaching on subject learning during lesson monitoring
 - ensuring the school improvement plan shows detailed actions for improving English and mathematics teaching and achievement, and how initiatives will be evaluated.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Having entered the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills which are generally typical of those found nationally, pupils make uneven progress across the school. Attainment in Year 2 has fluctuated over time but has been broadly average. Inspection shows attainment has recovered from a dip last year. Attainment in Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics but fewer pupils attain higher levels in writing and mathematics than should.
- By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children's attainment is at expected levels overall. There are strengths in speaking and listening and phonics but weaknesses in mathematical calculation. Children's progress slows at times because play activities for mathematics are inconsistently challenging, especially for calculation during outdoor play. Some children do not spend enough time on mathematics when choosing activities for themselves.
- The school's work to improve the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading. Pupils of different abilities made good progress in all the phonics' lessons observed.
- When reading to inspectors, pupils of different abilities successfully used phonics to sound out new words. However, reading records and discussions with pupils show that some lower-attaining pupils do not read often enough in school or at home, which slows reading progress.
- Most pupils successfully apply their phonics skills when writing. However, pupils' handwriting is not always neat or joined and standards of handwriting vary too much between classes in the same year group.
- Year 2 pupils do not always use interesting vocabulary when writing, which prevents standards rising more quickly. Lower-attaining pupils do not make fast enough progress in developing their ability to write in sentences.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress in mathematics. In Years 1 and 2 mathematical activities do not consistently build skills well in individual lessons and over time. Progress slows when pupils repeat too much earlier learning or become confused when steps are too hard.
- The pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers. Although the gap is closing, these pupils are about six months behind other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Funding has been used effectively to support identified pupils in their personal development and to provide extra adult help in small groups. However, progress is uneven across the school due to inconsistencies in teaching.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make progress similar to their peers. Small group teaching speeds up the progress of these groups but progress is also uneven across the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Overall, teaching has improved this year. There have been fewer staff changes and inadequate teaching has been eliminated through senior leaders' decisive action, support and training.
- Teaching is not consistently good because it is not always matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not progressively build pupils' skills in lessons and, too often, their work is too hard or too easy.
- At times, pupils are expected to use skills which have not been taught, for example when tackling mathematical problems. The grouping of pupils by their abilities enables teachers to plan more readily for the ability range. However, the lack of a structured scheme of work for teaching the steps in skills and knowledge limits teachers' ability to provide well-matched work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn well when taught directly in adult-led groups but there is not always enough adult support during independent activities. There is insufficient planning to stimulate mathematics play, especially for calculation during outdoor learning. Children's use of activities is not always monitored carefully enough.

- In phonics, a strong consistency in teachers' methods leads to good teaching. Teachers' good subject knowledge and robust planning enable them to build pupils' skills well. For example, phonics lessons observed for all ability sets were good and tasks ensured new learning built well on pupils' previous skills.
- However, while teachers keep a careful track of pupils' phonics skills, pupils' home–school reading records do not include enough reading targets and information about the key sounds and letters they should know, so parents are limited in being able to help their children.
- The teaching of handwriting varies between classes and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. In some classes, not enough attention is given to developing lower-attaining pupils' ability to write in sentences. Marking is variable across the school.
- Good relationships and the management of pupils are strengths in teaching and teachers are enthusiastic and keen to improve. They provide good opportunities for discussion and for pupils to share ideas, for example in a literacy lesson when Year 2 pupils shared ideas about riddles before making class presentations.
- The use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. Some are deployed well, for example in the teaching of phonics and in the pastoral support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, teaching assistants are sometimes restricted by the type of activities that teachers provide.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds work and play in harmony because moral and social development, founded on the need to respect each other, are well promoted. Pupils respond well to the school's strategies to promote good behaviour and safety.
- Most parents are pleased with behaviour at school. Inspectors found behaviour is mainly good in lessons and around the school but, occasionally, pupils lose concentration when work is not fully matched to their needs.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of bullying and know about its different forms, such as internet safety and name-calling. School records indicate that bullying is rare, and there are clear procedures in the school to deal with issues should they arise.
- There are many examples of pupils who have had difficulties with emotional and social skills joining in well with their peers, taking turns, waiting patiently and praising others. Disruption to lessons is unusual because these pupils are helped to adjust well to school.
- Attendance is in line with national averages. However, a few families do not ensure their children attend as regularly as they should. The school is working closely with these families in order to prompt regular attendance. This has led to a drop in the number of persistent absentees.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not brought about enough good teaching and progress. The school demonstrates the capacity to improve because leaders have improved the quality of teaching and progress in this academic year.
- The headteacher shows determined leadership and has gathered a team which shares her commitment to improving pupils' achievement. School leaders and teachers check pupils' assessment data very regularly to measure the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in order to make improvements. Phonics teaching is now consistently good because teachers are well supported through a structured curriculum and informed lesson monitoring.
- Year leaders manage English and mathematics within year groups but senior leaders have not ensured members of staff have the responsibility of leading these subjects across the school. There are no whole-school schemes of work for writing and mathematics. These issues inhibit teachers in their teaching, the development of shared leadership across the school and the

ability of staff to have a full impact on raising achievement.

- Improvement plans focus on the right priorities, including teaching. However, they lack detailed actions for improving literacy and numeracy, milestones for success and precise information for evaluating initiatives, including named personnel.
- Leaders have set challenging targets for teachers. Performance management of staff is closely linked to pupils' progress and teachers' professional development needs. However, leaders' lesson monitoring, while regular, does not consistently identify strengths and weaknesses in subjects. This limits staff's professional development.
- School leaders are now monitoring the impact of provision and spending on the progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. Effective use of pupil premium funding has enhanced pupils' personal development and well-being and their attainment is beginning to rise in literacy, as shown in their results at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage last year.
- Support from the local authority has been 'light', as the school was judged to be a good school. The school initiated a detailed local authority review one year ago and the school has energetically tackled issues relating to weak teaching. Local authority training for governors has had a very positive impact on their leadership, including setting demanding performance targets for the headteacher.
- The school's ethos is inclusive in seeking to promote equality, and discrimination is not tolerated. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and their mature attitudes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is now a strength of the school. Its members have high expectations and governors have been appropriately trained by the local authority, including for understanding and interpreting assessment information. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the school to account through a focused view of the school's performance. They know about the quality of teaching and how performance management is being used to improve this. They are fully involved in setting targets. Governors know exactly how pupil premium monies are spent and are increasingly able to judge the difference this spending and provision are making to pupils' outcomes. Safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118370
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	413396

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharon Westby
Headteacher	Jan Parsons
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
Telephone number	01233 624165
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Email address	headteacher@willesborough-infant.kent.sch.uk

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