

Willesborough Junior School

Highfield Road, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0JU

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school's effectiveness is good. Pupils achieve well and leave with secure basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils speak confidently, listen carefully and read widely and often.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and each other. Many enjoy being playground friends or peer mentors to others in the school. The school is good at keeping pupils safe.
- Following building improvements, pupils now have longer and more regular sessions that help to develop their physical fitness and skills.
- Practically all parents and carers value what the school achieves for their children. Most would recommend it to others.
- The quality of teaching is typically good and caters for the wide range of pupils' abilities.
- Both in lessons and in small groups, the school supports pupils who are vulnerable or who have special educational needs well.
- The headteacher, supported well by other senior and middle leaders, quickly identifies where pupils need extra help, particularly when they join the school.
- Governors provide challenging support, often because they have a broad range of relevant and professional skills themselves. They use these to good effect to challenge senior leaders to maintain the school's effectiveness, as well as seeking areas to help it improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils write for a range of purposes, but sometimes pupils' inconsistent spelling and untidy presentation let down the quality of their writing so they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils do not apply their secure calculation skills or mathematical knowledge enough to everyday uses to see the point of what they learn.
- Marking of pupils' work does not always help them to achieve the highest levels in their English and mathematical work.
- Pupils rarely use the good skills they acquire in computing and other technology to help them learn in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work, scrutinised information on pupils’ progress and looked at work in pupils’ books. They considered information about safeguarding, monitoring of teaching and behaviour management.
- Most of the inspection was spent observing learning. Inspectors observed 22 lessons, including three with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils working with an adult other than their teacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 3 and 6, and talked to these children about their learning and the behaviour of pupils over time.
- Meetings were held with leaders, members of school staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils formally and others informally in lessons and in the playground.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by a number of parents and carers who spoke to inspectors informally at the beginning of the school day. They also took into account 47 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Vant	Additional Inspector
Jackie Edwards	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much bigger than most junior schools.
- The headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection. Significant building work has just been completed which has provided a second hall space.
- Most pupils are White British, although around a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. A small proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a morning breakfast club as well as an after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding levels by:
 - ensuring that pupils use accurate spelling in their written work
 - making sure that pupils use their good calculation skills and mathematical knowledge to investigate problems or apply their skills in other subjects so they can see how useful they are
 - ensuring that pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different ways to support and extend their day-to-day learning
 - giving pupils written comments that help them to know how to make their work better
 - insisting that in all classes pupils present their work consistently well.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their starting points, pupils' achievement is good. When pupils join the school, senior leaders quickly get the measure of pupils' relative strengths and weaknesses. This means extra support is put in place where needed, particularly for those pupils with weaker basic skills.
- Pupils speak confidently and clearly in lessons. They listen carefully to their teacher and in pairs. Regular discussions with a partner help them clarify their ideas before answering questions posed by their teacher or other pupils.
- Pupils read confidently by the time they leave for secondary school. They read a range of authors and readily talk about their favourites. They like using the well-resourced library.
- Pupils have reached broadly average levels in national tests in English and mathematics since the previous inspection. Pupils write relatively confidently and, particularly the most able, are extremely confident and creative writers. However, some pupils still find it difficult to spell consistently well. Recent whole-school approaches to develop pupils' reading and writing are beginning to have an impact on tackling and remedying weaknesses for some pupils.
- In mathematics, pupils solve basic and more complex number problems confidently and identify the different properties of shapes accurately. For example, pupils in a Year 6 lesson correctly identified right angles, perpendicular and parallel lines. However, they were not so clear about how they could use this knowledge and understand its application in everyday situations. Their past work indicates that they tackle investigative work relatively infrequently, reducing their ability to put their number skills and knowledge into practice.
- More space generated by a recently completed hall means pupils have extra lessons to boost their fitness and physical skills.
- Those pupils eligible for extra funding make good progress so that any gaps between them and other pupils have reduced very quickly to minimal levels. In Years 3 and 4, these pupils do better than others in the class.
- Those pupils new to speaking or writing English make good progress as staff identify their needs quickly and use specific support to help them succeed. One pupil who could not speak English a year ago said, 'I really like reading, but particularly love writing.'
- Small-group work, often outside classrooms, combined with individual support within lessons, means that pupils with special educational needs keep pace with others. They develop their basic skills well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good over time. Pupils' learning is supported by lessons that flow well, have the expectation of good behaviour and where pupils listen carefully to the teacher and each other.
- Teaching makes the most of pupils' enthusiasm and their willingness to take part. Pupils often listen intently to their teacher's explanations or instructions, which means they are clear about what they need to do. Occasionally, pupils are restless if they are not enthused by the activities they are completing.
- Teachers skilfully weave thought-provoking questions within their lessons to help extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social or cultural understanding. For example, pupils thought carefully and sensitively about how an author constructed a story designed to make you think.
- Extra adults provide good levels of support, particularly to those pupils who are vulnerable, speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs. Activities, often taking place just outside classrooms, help target individual or small groups of pupils to develop their learning still further.
- The whole-school approach to developing pupils' basic reading and writing helps pupils gain in confidence when tackling unfamiliar words to read or to write. However, some pupils still find it

difficult to spell consistently well in their day-to-day writing.

- Pupils say that their lessons are usually enjoyable. This is often because teaching uses a variety of approaches so that all pupils, regardless of their ability, can succeed. This is particularly true for the most-able pupils who are confident writers and mathematicians. They told inspectors they are particularly looking forward to attempting to reach levels in national tests that are much higher than normally expected for their age.
- Pupils generally know how well they are doing. This is often because the targets set by their teacher give them a clear steer about what they have to do next. However, while there is some high-quality marking, this is not the case in all classes; not all pupils are clear about how to improve their work to the highest levels.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They enjoy saying what they like or dislike about the school. What they like far outweighs what they dislike. They, along with some parents and carers, readily acknowledge that behaviour occasionally dips, but this is rarely serious.
- Members of the school council say they enjoy their role in shaping how the school develops, for example contributing to the school's citizenship programme. Other pupils enthusiastically told inspectors about their roles as 'buddies' or 'peer mentors', which they rightly believe benefit other pupils who may feel in need of extra support.
- Although pupils are enthusiastic to learn, they do not always present work to the highest standards, particularly their writing.
- Pupils involved in running the new healthy eating tuck shop were enthusiastic for inspectors to have a look at it. They understand the basic principles of running a business, such as making sure they have the right products or how to advertise them to other pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers of using the internet, and know what to do if they feel they have a problem. They also know how to ensure that others are safe within the school. Pupils say that bullying is relatively rare, and are clear that the school reacts quickly to any concerns, should they occur.
- Pupils say they like the wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities. These range from those which get them ready for the day, such as 'shake and wake' in the breakfast club, to those which develop their sporting skills.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher quickly identified areas for improvement after joining the school, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This has ensured the school's effectiveness has not dipped since the school's previous inspection.
- Senior leaders and middle managers (those responsible for subjects in all year groups) are effective. They identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind, while also celebrating the pupils' successes. They recognise, however, that highly effective teaching is not yet the norm to push pupils' achievement to outstanding levels.
- Staff are generally very positive about the changes since the previous inspection and most, but not all, feel that they are well supported and receive helpful training.
- Staff from local secondary schools visit to provide specialist support in science. Willesborough staff teach modern foreign languages, a range of musical activities and plan interesting topics such as 'Pop art' or how machines work. Links with the adjacent infant school are now developing strongly.
- Contact with schools in other countries help to develop pupils' awareness of others with different lifestyles. Although regular activities take place in dedicated computer suites, pupils do not readily use a variety of ICT programmes regularly to extend their skills.

- The school has made good use of extra funding for sport to enhance the time for pupils to take part in sports-based lessons. The addition of a new hall means pupils get physical activities for an extra hour per week.
- Senior leaders regularly gauge the quality of teaching by looking at learning and pupils' work, assessing their progress carefully in each class and discussing with them what they feel helps them learn really well; staff are clear that their pay progression links with improvements in pupils' achievement over time.
- Senior leaders enhance links with parents and carers through workshops, open evenings and social events. They are looking carefully at the results of a recent parental survey, indicating that parents and carers would like more information about their child's progress and level of homework.
- The local authority, recognising the school's continuing effectiveness, provides light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide effective support, often making the best use of their individual skills, such as in finance and personnel, to provide advice and guidance for senior staff. For example, governors helped the headteacher to review staffing structures and to ensure that pay progression for staff is linked to improvements in pupils' achievement.
 - Training for governors is regular, making good use of online resources so that they can access it when convenient. This enables them to have a clear understanding of how the school's performance compares to others, both locally and nationally. Governors also probe how well the school uses extra funding to help minimise differences in attainment between groups of pupils.
 - Governors visit the school, although they admit that this is not always as often as they would like. Nonetheless, they gather enough information to gauge how well initiatives work, particularly related to the quality of teaching. This helps them to tailor their support and challenge for senior leaders to improve further. They ensure that site security, safeguarding and child protection arrangements are secure and that equal opportunities exist wherever possible. They support the school's zero tolerance of discrimination of any kind.

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	118371
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	443872
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Viner
Headteacher	Jennie King
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 October 2009
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