

Willingham Primary School

Thodays Close, Cambridge, Willingham CB24 5LE

Inspection dates

2–3 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, leaders have not yet ensured that it is good or better throughout the school. Pupils' progress is variable, particularly at Key Stage 2, where too many do not achieve as well as they should.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others remain too wide at Key Stage 2.
- Not all teachers use their information about pupils' knowledge and understanding to set work that helps all groups to make good progress.
- Questioning and discussion does not always enable pupils to develop their understanding and ideas fully, or help teachers identify those who need extra help or challenge.
- A small minority of pupils lose focus when the work they complete is too easy or too hard for them. They sometimes disrupt learning, which slows progress for others.
- Feedback that is intended to help pupils understand how they can improve sometimes lacks clarity or precision. Pupils continue to make the same mistakes, or do not deepen their understanding, as a result.
- A minority of pupils complete work in a rushed or untidy manner and some teachers do not challenge this effectively.
- A minority of teachers do not ensure that the help they give to pupils with special educational needs is effective enough to ensure that they make the progress that they are capable of.
- The impact of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage on children's progress, particularly in numeracy, is variable.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher's relentless drive to improve teaching is having a marked impact, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 rose sharply in 2015. Disadvantaged pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making almost as much progress as others.
- Pupils achieve particularly highly in art because teaching is consistently effective.
- Governors know the school well. Their insistent scrutiny, challenge and support have helped leaders to drive improvements in key areas of priority.
- Pupils are safe and secure and the school makes a strong contribution to their personal development and welfare. Attendance, though below average, is rising.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better, so that progress is rapid for all groups of pupils across the school, especially for those who are disadvantaged, those who have disabilities and special educational needs and the more able by:
 - planning work that provides challenge for all abilities and extends pupils' learning effectively
 - adapting activities during lessons if pupils find them too hard or too easy
 - asking pupils questions that deepen their thinking and that help the more able to reach the highest levels
 - providing pupils with opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real-life problems
 - ensuring that pupils are clear about what it is that they need to do by the end of a lesson
 - making sure that all teachers communicate high expectations and insist that pupils complete all work fully, taking care over their presentation
 - ensuring that when feedback is provided it is precise about what pupils need to improve or work further on, and how they can do so
 - eliminating low-level disruption that slows pupils' progress
 - providing additional support that is precisely focused upon the aspects of learning that pupils find difficult, so that gaps in knowledge and understanding close rapidly.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership by ensuring that:
 - the pupil premium 'action plan' is implemented fully
 - the impact of additional support given to pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and those who have disabilities and special educational needs is evaluated carefully, making any changes necessary to close pupils' gaps in knowledge and understanding, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Increase the proportion of children in the early years who achieve a good level of development and are ready for the next stage by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use up-to-date information about children's progress to plan activities that will help them to move forward quickly
 - increasing children's opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not ensured that teaching has been consistently strong enough to enable all groups of pupils to make rapid progress and secure good attainment. The headteacher has secured both improvements and a dedicated team of senior and middle leaders, but some have only recently been appointed and have had insufficient time to drive forward improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The headteacher has been relentless in her determination to establish an ethos of high expectations for, and from, each and every pupil, regardless of ability or background. With strong support from governors and the deputy headteacher, she has halted the decline in the school's performance in 2013 and 2014. Changes to the curriculum and improvements in teaching have driven a considerable increase in pupils' progress and attainment at Key Stage 1. All leaders, and most teachers, now demonstrate high aspiration for pupils.
- Until recently, leaders' use of resources to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as others have not been effective at Key Stage 2 due to less than effective teaching and the limited impact of some of the additional help given to particular pupils. Gaps between these pupils' progress and that of others were too wide and, overall, disadvantaged pupils performed poorly relative to others in the 2014 and 2015 national tests. Leaders have prioritised improvements in this regard; scrutiny of current pupils' work indicates that although these gaps are closing, they remain too wide.
- In the past, leaders have not ensured that the support teachers and other adults give to some pupils with special educational needs has enabled them to make good progress from their individual starting points. Some teachers have lacked an understanding of individuals' needs and how best to meet them, which has limited these pupils' ability to engage with their work productively.
- Leaders have ensured that regular checks on pupils' progress are undertaken, and this has provided information about how well key groups are doing compared to all pupils in the school and pupils nationally in relation to their starting points. They have not ensured that all teachers use this information to plan additional support for individuals that targets the precise aspects of work that they find difficult. This has limited the extent to which some older pupils have closed the gaps in their knowledge and understanding caused by previous weaknesses in teaching.
- Recently appointed subject leaders of English and mathematics, and the school's special educational needs coordinator, have a secure understanding of what needs to improve, and have worked with governors to create well-targeted and appropriately prioritised improvement plans. Some improvements are already evident; boys are now more engaged in writing tasks, and a drive to extend the amount of writing pupils complete had a marked impact upon the proportions making at least expected progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015.
- Reviews of the school's work are rigorous. Governors and leaders have established improvement plans that include measurable milestones and targets. These are allowing governors to hold senior leaders to account. Difficult decisions have been taken when standards are not high enough. A large number of new teachers joined the school at the start of the current academic year.
- Leaders' changes to the curriculum have ensured that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their ability to write at length for different purposes across a range of subject areas. Pupils' progress in writing has improved as a result. Pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum. Art, physical education and personal, social and health education are particular strengths. Pupils take part in the many extra-curricular activities, including competitive sports. Primary sports funding is used well. A specialist sports teacher provides expertise in developing pupils' and teachers' skills in physical education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well catered for. Pupils develop a wide range of skills in creative subjects, especially art. The school promotes values of democracy, tolerance and respect for other faiths through assemblies, visits, religious education lessons and elections to the school council. The school's behaviour policy encourages pupils to recognise when their actions have had a negative impact upon others and to make amends. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers are supported by high-quality training. Changes to performance management arrangements mean that they are set precise, robust and rigorous targets; teachers are held to account for pupils' progress. Leaders tackle underperformance swiftly and with impact. The school's monitoring records indicate that the quality of teaching is improving as a result. Leaders have also provided additional training for teaching assistants so that they are better able to help students who have special educational

needs. Inspectors saw the impact of this improved support both in the classroom and when examining pupils' work, but it is not yet consistent.

- The current headteacher has made extensive use of local authority support to help tackle the weaknesses she identified further to her appointment following the school's previous inspection. The local authority has, at the school's request, carried out reviews of the quality of education being provided. These have confirmed the accuracy of leaders' own judgements and helped leaders to prioritise the right improvement activity.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are determined to secure improvement. They have fully supported the actions that the headteacher has taken to tackle weaknesses in teaching. Governors are fully involved in the strategic direction of the school and ask challenging questions. They follow this up by undertaking a range of activities to gain a clear view of the quality of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and its impact upon the learning of different groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs.
 - Governors plan improvements with leaders and make return visits to establish the impact of actions that have been taken. An example of the impact of this insistent challenge, as well as support, is the recent improvement in provision for pupils with special educational needs.
 - Governors have recently completed a review of the impact of the school's use of pupil premium funding, and have used the findings, together with research evidence, to draw up a pupil premium 'action plan' with leaders. This has not yet been fully implemented.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous and effective. Governors have made sure that the school meets the statutory requirements. Safeguarding training and procedures are up to date, including procedures to check the suitability of adults working with children at the school. Any concerns about children are identified and dealt with appropriately and determinedly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Although improved teaching is having a greater impact on pupils' progress and achievement, its quality remains too variable. In the past, in some year groups, pupils have not made good progress, and at Key Stage 2, gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding caused by previous weak teaching remain, particularly for the less able.
- A minority of teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' progress to plan activities that are suitably challenging. Sometimes, pupils' progress slows because the work they are asked to do is too easy or too difficult for them, or because the teacher's explanation of what they need to do is not clear enough. Sometimes teachers allow pupils to choose between activities of varying levels of difficulty; often those who might deepen their understanding by trying a harder task choose a straightforward one.
- Not all teachers routinely assess pupils' understanding during lessons and ask questions, or alter tasks, to make them think more deeply or help them understand something that they find difficult. Sometimes teachers move pupils on to the next piece of work before being sure that their understanding is secure. This limits the progress of some who are capable of reaching the highest levels of attainment.
- Some teachers do not do enough to tackle pupils' low expectations of themselves, or to insist that pupils present their work well. In consequence, some pupils, particularly boys, produce scruffy work which they have applied insufficient effort to.
- The quality of mathematics teaching, although improving, remains variable. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to real-life problems. This limits the ability of the more able, in particular, to tackle more complex work at the higher levels.
- There are many strengths in the teaching of writing at both key stages. In Year 1, for example, inspectors found strong progress being made by all groups of pupils, with examples of the more able writing well-constructed sentences, punctuated accurately with full stops and capital letters. Across both key stages, pupils have sufficient opportunity to write at length using different styles for different purposes.
- The teaching of reading has improved considerably. At Key Stage 1, pupils who read to inspectors were able to 'sound out' unfamiliar words well, and were reading texts pitched at an appropriate level for them.
- Teaching over time in art has had a particularly marked impact upon pupils' abilities. By the time pupils are in Year 6, many can create art work characterised by a level of technical proficiency or a power of expression that is highly advanced given their age.

- Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that, in many classes, the quality of written feedback has improved markedly since the start of the academic year, as has its impact on pupils' progress in writing. The quality of feedback pupils receive remains too variable, particularly in English at Key Stage 2. In mathematics, pupils respond readily when feedback sets them additional challenges but often those who have 'got everything right' are not asked to complete more demanding work that would deepen their understanding.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they are given time to improve their work. However, feedback sometimes lacks precision about what pupils need to improve and how they can do so, and some temporary teachers offer pupils very limited feedback. This means that some continue to make the same mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and they told inspectors that lessons are usually interesting and that they enjoy the other activities that they take part in.
- Pupils are generally confident to try new challenges, though some are content to take the 'easy option' if their teachers allow this. Most teachers and other adults who support learning are encouraging pupils to work things out for themselves without adult support, but they are not always encouraged to do so.
- Pupils relish responsibility. They are enthusiastic about their role as part of the school council; those who have been trained to serve as 'peer mediators' enjoy helping others to resolve disputes or other issues and know when to pass things on to a teacher.
- The school's leaders and teachers work well with a small number of pupils who find it very difficult to manage their behaviour, and help them to stay within the classroom wherever possible whilst minimising disruption to others.
- Staff are proactive in reporting any concerns that they have about pupils' welfare. The deputy headteacher works hard to ensure that any child protection concerns are reported to the relevant agencies promptly, and relentless in following up issues.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, and understand how to identify potential dangers and stay safe online. They are aware of all forms of bullying and the overwhelming majority who spoke with inspectors were confident that any issues they reported would be resolved.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although most pupils have positive attitudes to their work and conduct themselves well at all times, a small minority sometimes disrupt the learning of others during lessons by talking over the teacher or engaging in off-task chat when they do not find work engaging, or when it is too easy or too hard for them. This behaviour slows the pace of learning.
- Pupils' behaviour at break and lunch times is usually good.
- Senior leaders use all available means by which to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Attendance rates have risen over the past three years, both overall and for different groups of pupils. The school has been particularly successful in increasing the attendance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils from previously low levels. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has increased at a faster rate than the attendance of others, but there remains a small number of parents who do not send their child to school regularly. As a result, overall attendance, although improved for the large majority of pupils, is below average.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Attainment in mathematics requires improvement. Attainment in this subject was below average at the end of Year 6 in both 2014 and 2015 because too few pupils made better than expected progress. Inspectors' scrutiny of work and observations of learning in lessons confirms that although improvement is evident in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, overall current Key Stage 2 pupils make slower

progress in this subject.

- The in-school gap, and the gap nationally, between the proportion of less-able disadvantaged pupils who make at least expected progress compared to that of others by the end of Key Stage 2 is too high. In 2015, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and of others nationally widened in writing and in mathematics. Inspectors' scrutiny of current Key Stage 2 pupils' work indicates that gaps are narrowing in writing and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics.
- The in-school attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowed considerably in 2015 in Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics, and was eliminated in reading. The gap between the attainment of these pupils and others nationally also narrowed sharply.
- Attainment in reading was below average at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014; in 2015 it was above the national average, with boys' attainment significantly so. Inspection evidence, together with the school's monitoring information, indicates that this improvement is being sustained.
- The proportion of pupils making expected and above expected progress in writing by the end of Year 6, which was low in 2014, increased sharply in 2015. Pupils' attainment, overall, was above the national average. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 also increased markedly and was significantly above the national average. These improvements reflect changes to the curriculum and improvements in the teaching of writing. Inspectors' observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work indicates this is the area in which current pupils are making the most rapid progress.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's monitoring information indicates that they make good progress in science, particularly at Key Stage 1, and that the same is true of art and physical education.
- Too few of the most-able pupils attain the highest levels in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Progress is accelerating for many current disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This reflects the clearer understanding that most teachers have of how to best support these pupils, the impact of additional training, and changes to the ways in which teaching assistants work within the classroom.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The recently appointed early years leader has high expectations and has started to tackle some of the issues that led to children's progress being slow and attainment poor overall, given their starting points, during the previous academic year.
- The quality of teaching has been too variable because of turbulence in staffing. Where teaching is effective, expectations are high and children are challenged; teacher questioning helps establish any misconceptions that are then corrected, and encourages children to think and to explain. Where it is less effective, teachers are willing to accept, and to praise, work that does not reflect children's ability, and some complete work that is too easy or too difficult for them. Children focus upon completing the task at hand, but are not encouraged to think about what they have learned upon the completion of it.
- Although the assessment of children's work is generally accurate, records of what children can do and need to learn next are not always updated regularly enough. This limits teachers' ability to plan activities that help move children forward. As a result, some children's writing is less well developed than it should be.
- Scrutiny of children's work indicates that although the majority, including those who are disadvantaged, are making clear progress over time, they do not complete enough mathematics work. This means that some do not form numbers correctly.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences for children; the early years leader has improved the learning environment, particularly the outdoors area. Teachers are aware of the needs of children who are disabled or who have special educational needs and plan activities appropriately.
- Children behave well both during lessons and on the playground at playtime. They almost invariably respect each other and their teachers, and often reinforce 'the rules' with each other.
- Staff make sure that children feel safe and are kept safe in both the classroom and the outdoors area, because teachers have planned the learning environment with safeguarding in mind.
- The early years leader has worked well with pre-schools so that teachers have an accurate understanding of children's needs on entry, and what it is that they have already learned and can do. Teachers are starting to use this information to inform their planning, so that children work on tasks that are a good

match for their needs and abilities. The early years leader has used this information to set ambitious targets for children which, in turn, is raising teachers' expectations about what they can achieve.

- In 2015, too few children achieved a good level of development from their generally typical starting points. This meant many were not ready for the new challenges in Year 1. Inspectors' scrutiny of work indicates that most are catching up in their early literacy and numeracy skills.

School details

Unique reference number	110622
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10005718

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bev Lawrence
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Vyveanne Francis
Telephone number	01954 283030
Website	www.willingham.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@willingham.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2012

Information about this school

- Willingham is an above-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding given to schools for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2012; several current leaders have been appointed recently. A significant number of teachers have left the school. Seven new teachers joined at the beginning of the current academic year.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection converted from a short inspection to a full inspection, to check whether the school continues to provide a good quality of education and whether safeguarding is effective. There was insufficient evidence to support these two judgements at the end of day one. Three additional inspectors joined the inspection on day two.
- Inspectors observed a wide range of learning activities across both key stages and subjects. These included 13 longer visits to lessons and several shorter visits to multiple lessons as part of learning walks. A large number of pupils' books from different year groups and subjects were considered. Inspectors listened to several pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with several middle leaders and a number of members of the governing body, including the Chair. A meeting was also held with the local authority representative. Inspectors also met with several groups of pupils and spoke to them informally throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took into account 194 parental responses expressed through the online Parent View survey. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day, and considered a number of written responses submitted by individuals.
- The inspection team scrutinised information about achievement and the assessment of learning. They examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work.
- A review of safeguarding records and procedures was carried out.

Inspection team

Jason Howard, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Michael Jude	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector

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