



# Willington Lower School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109491  
**LEA** BEDFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278206  
**Inspection dates** 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs. Jackie Cousins LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		MK44 3QD
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 9		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01234838280
<b>Number on roll</b>	56	<b>Fax number</b>	01234838280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.P Hayward
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Elaine Wheeler

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small primary school is in the village of Willington near Bedford. Most year groups contain 15 children or fewer. The majority of children live in privately-owned houses and some live in rented homes. Levels of free school meals are below average. When the youngest children start school their knowledge and understanding are similar to those expected for four-year-olds. Overall the school has a below average proportion of children with special educational needs. A significant percentage of children arrive part way through the year. Nine out of ten children are from white British families. A few children are from minority ethnic groups. No children are believed not to have English as their first language.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Willington Lower is a good school and sits in the heart of its community. Most parents are really happy with the quality of education provided. One parent says, 'The children are involved in a huge range of activities...', and the school seems to have a very happy, caring atmosphere and outlook.' The leadership and management of the school are effective. The headteacher's leadership is very good. Teaching is good and so children achieve well. However, marking and individual targets for pupils are not used well enough to show children what they can do to improve their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are dedicated and care well for children. The children's involvement in the community is outstanding. The children are given a good start in the reception class because of particularly effective teaching and leadership. Standards in the reception class are above average. Outside play equipment for the youngest children and gymnastics equipment for older children are rather basic. The school has no hall, and this hampers provision for physical education. However, many children have opportunities to attend a wide range of after school and lunch time clubs. The school offers good value for money. The inspection confirms the school's judgement that the improvement since the last inspection has been good. For example, standards are higher and are likely to be at least above average in the 2005 tests. The school's capacity to improve is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve teachers' use of marking and individual children's targets.
- Improve the quality of outside play facilities for the youngest children.
- Create a suitable space and develop a wider range of equipment for children to use for gymnastics activities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's judgement that most children make good progress in the school. When children enter the school, their levels of knowledge and understanding are average overall. They get off to a really good start in the reception class and achieve above average standards. The majority of children make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards for boys and girls vary considerably from year to year because there are such small numbers of children in each year group. In the national 2005 tests, standards are expected to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are particularly high this year because there is only one child in this year group who is currently assessed as having special educational needs. Overall standards are lower in year groups where a significant proportion of children have arrived part way through the school year. This is why standards were lower in 2004. Over recent years the school has maintained at least average standards. Information gathered by the school demonstrates that children from minority ethnic groups make good progress. The school is in line to meet its challenging targets. Most children in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress and attain above average standards. Standards

of reading are particularly strong and many Year 4 children read plays very expressively. Standards in Year 4 in information and communication technology (ICT) are above expectations. This is because of the good use of laptops, interactive whiteboards and teachers' expertise. For instance, many Year 4 children used computers effectively to combine writing and pictures together to make posters about harvest festival. Most children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of the children is good. Children really enjoy coming to school. Their attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is very good. Children's attendance is above average. They say that they feel safe and if another child hurts or upsets them it is dealt with firmly. Children learn effectively about how to stay safe, for example when they find out about road safety. Children are encouraged very well to lead healthy lifestyles. For instance, a five minute daily aerobics session teaches children about healthy ways to live. Staff promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through religious education, assemblies and other work. For example, an assembly allowed children to reflect thoughtfully about the value of all creatures, linked to their studies of the Buddhist religion. Children are well prepared for life in a multicultural society through their work in religious education, geography and art. Children become mature members of the school community. They are expected to be responsible for their own learning and to try to resolve problems independently if possible. This helps to develop important life skills. School councillors develop a sense of responsibility by, for example, accompanying children needing minor first aid. The school council raised money for a 'buddy bench' where children sit if they have no one to play with at break times. Children's contribution to the community is outstanding. For example, children go and visit youngsters with disabilities at a local riding school. Children raise money for many charities and say they want to help people who don't have enough food. The effective development of key skills in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT provide a good preparation for children's future learning and life beyond school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. One highly significant strength is the teachers' use of open-ended questions which means that children learn to think deeply about their knowledge. Effective use of ICT and interactive whiteboards made lessons more exciting. In one outstanding Year 1 lesson, the teacher's very high expectations of children and clear explanation of ways to spell words ensured that children learned to write well. The teacher's very specific guidance meant that they knew what they had done well and how to improve. Allowing children to practise their writing on wipeable whiteboards is an example of a very effective teaching method. Paired discussion work was used

well to deepen children's understanding of important ideas. Assessment of children's progress is satisfactory. The tracking of children's progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science is well established and so the school knows which children need extra support or greater challenge. Individual education plans contain specific targets and so children with special educational needs are supported well. Children's work in most subjects is carefully assessed. However, teachers' marking and subsequent targets for pupils are not consistently used to explain to children how they are doing. This means that children are not clear, on a daily basis, about what they have done well or how they could improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The work children do is rich and varied with sufficient time given to all subjects. The children achieve well in English, mathematics and science, but the school works effectively to ensure that children's days are varied and they have the chance to learn about many subjects. An example is the good provision for music, including specialist teaching in instruments such as piano, cello and violin. Children have many opportunities to sing and perform both within and outside school in Christmas and summer productions. The children's experiences are enriched by after school and lunch time clubs. They can join drama, football, art and ICT clubs. The school evaluated this area as good. However, inspection evidence shows that children's work in physical activities is limited by the lack of some important facilities. Resources for most subjects are good but without a hall and very little equipment for gymnastics, physical education is limited. The children have to walk down to the local community hall to do dance and gymnastics. The outside play area for the reception class contains apparatus which is not suitable for young children. The other pieces of play equipment which the youngest children have are rather basic and are not very exciting.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support for children are good. The school is very successful in meeting its aim of providing, '...a stimulating, welcoming, happy and secure environment ...' Staff know their children well and are quick to pick up any concerns that they have. Child protection procedures are in place. The arrangements to settle in new children and staff are good. A strong emphasis on children's safety and well being in all activities encourages children to adopt healthy lifestyles and to support and care for each other sensitively. For example, a recent project encouraged children, parents and staff to walk part or all of the way to school. The travel plan produced for the project won the school a grant to create a covered area for parents to wait under in the dry. Children made leaflets and posters to explain to drivers that they should not park right outside the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are effective and self-evaluation has been thorough. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards in Years 2 and 4 have significantly improved in reading, writing and ICT. This is mainly due to better tracking of children's progress which results in children achieving more. Teachers meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss individual children's progress and this means that every child's progress is watched closely. The school's capacity to improve further is good. The very clear vision of the headteacher ensures that all children are well integrated into school life and are treated supportively. Subject leaders manage the development of their responsibilities well. They have analysed children's work effectively. Work in children's science books shows how the school has developed this subject to include more practical activities which make learning more memorable. The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses successfully. It has created a challenging development plan which is driving improvements efficiently. Observations of teaching have improved the quality of teaching significantly since the last inspection so that it is now good. Governors are involved effectively in the creation of the school development plan and parents' ideas are included. Governors come in to visit the school while it is working and have looked at the quality of science teaching. Governors keep a careful watch on finances and the above average underspend has been saved to help build a hall. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping me find out about your school. I enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was interesting to talk to your teachers and watch two assemblies. What I thought was good about your school: - older children look after younger ones well and mostly you are kind to each other; - the school council means you can suggest ideas to improve the school; - you work hard in your lessons and teachers encourage you to do your best; - teaching assistants care for you well and help you to do good work; - your headteacher has very good ideas about ways to improve the school; - computers and whiteboards are helping you to improve your ICT work. I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers to do this by listening to them carefully. The most important things include the fact that teachers could mark your work more carefully and use your individual targets to show you what to do to make your work even better. The school needs a hall where you can use interesting pieces of apparatus in gymnastics lessons. The school could make the outside play area for the youngest children more exciting. Keep up the good work at Willington Lower School.