

Willoughton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120487
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number	291754
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Broadbent
Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Belcher
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Northfield Lane Willoughton Gainsborough DN21 5RT
Telephone number	01427 668381
Fax number	01427 668381

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school takes pupils from the village and its surrounding rural area. Almost all pupils have White British backgrounds. A below average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. No pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Since the last inspection, the school has faced considerable turmoil. The headteacher joined the school in November 2005 and is currently the headteacher of another school in the local authority as well as this one. This arrangement is to be reviewed in July 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils' personal development is good and they enjoy learning. A warm, caring environment helps pupils feel happy and secure at school, form good relationships and trust the adults that work with them. Pupils' growing confidence, together with their sound academic progress, prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

Children start in the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are generally typical of standards at this age. With a purposeful working atmosphere in the classroom and with older pupils providing good role models, children settle quickly and progress satisfactorily. At the end of the Reception Year they reach the expected levels in all the areas of learning. This satisfactory progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average, with reading being the weakest. In Year 6 pupils are working at broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, with English being a strength. While teaching and learning are satisfactory, resulting in pupils' satisfactory achievement, the level of challenge is not always high enough, especially for the more able pupils. This unnecessarily limits what they can achieve. Appropriate support enables pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve as well as their classmates. The curriculum is satisfactory and additional activities and experiences enhance learning well. Care, guidance and support arrangements are satisfactory overall. Care arrangements are good and parents are confident that if problems arise these are dealt with promptly. However, pupils are not given enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a period of considerable turmoil and a serious decline in standards, the new headteacher's good leadership has been key to the improvements made in the last year. The school is now a happy place, focused on raising standards so that pupils are better prepared for the next stage of their education. Through her accurate analysis of what needs to be done to improve the school's performance and the action she has taken to achieve this, the decline in standards has been arrested. Quite rightly, staff have focused on checking pupils' progress rigorously, and good assessment and tracking procedures identify pupils who need additional support. However, not all middle managers check closely enough how provision could be improved in their subjects. Similarly, while governors are very supportive and manage finances well, their involvement in checking the school's performance is limited. The school judges itself as satisfactory and this is accurate. In light of the improvements so far and a good understanding of what still needs to be done, managers have the capacity to improve the school further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by challenging all pupils fully, especially the more able.
- Make sure that pupils understand how they can improve their work and achieve more.
- Ensure that governors and middle managers check the work of the school and its performance more rigorously.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in the Reception Year with skills and knowledge generally at the levels expected in all the areas of learning. Pre-school visits and good assessment procedures identify children's individual needs and activities are modified accordingly so that they all achieve satisfactorily. Children leave the Reception Year having attained all the goals expected for their age.

Achievement in Years 1 to 6 has improved since 2006 and is now satisfactory in all subjects and for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In the national assessments in 2006, pupils in Year 2 reached standards that were at the national average in writing, below average in mathematics and exceptionally low in reading. Reading remains the weakest area but teachers are improving standards in this subject. Pupils are now working at broadly average standards in writing and mathematics. In the Year 6 national tests, pupils attained average standards in English, below average standards in science and exceptionally low standards in mathematics. With improvements in assessment this year and interventions to support targeted groups, Year 6 pupils are now working at broadly average levels in all three subjects, with English remaining the strongest.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy learning and try their best. They behave well and respect others. 'It's good here because we have lots of friends', said one pupil. Older pupils look after younger ones to check they play safely. Links with the church and environmental projects support pupils' spiritual development well. Pupils have a good understanding of western cultural traditions and they appreciate the cultural diversity in Britain by visiting places of worship and celebrating festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

School council members represent their classmates and influence decisions regarding, for example, rotas for playground activities. The 'school shop managers' raise valuable income for purchasing play equipment. Through residential visits and other social events pupils successfully learn to work with others. They play an active role in village events, organise coffee mornings and community lunches and raise funds for charities.

Pupils understand the importance of healthy living as they enjoy the 'wholesome lunches' prepared in the village hall and take exercise through various sports clubs. They know well the dangers of drugs and how to stay safe. Although a few pupils are regularly late, attendance is now satisfactory. Visits and many visitors successfully introduce pupils to life and work beyond the school. A lively interest in learning and satisfactory progress in their basic academic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage lessons well and pupils enjoy learning. Good use is made of teaching assistants to help all pupils participate fully in lessons. This is particularly useful where pupils work on practical activities and need more support. Staff know the pupils well and encourage them to

do their best and ask for help if they need it. Children in the Reception Year benefit from working alongside older pupils so they can learn from them, but occasionally the time spent listening to class presentations is too long for all to remain fully attentive and be as involved as they could be. However, the wide mix of ages benefit Year 1 and 2 pupils because they can use the same resources as younger children as they build on their previous learning. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is satisfactory and pupils work sensibly. However, throughout the school pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. Some rely too much on being told what to do and expectations are not high enough for them to work independently and think about what they are doing and why. This prevents them from making better progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

With more opportunities for independent play, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is now satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 themes incorporating all the areas of learning are planned to help pupils build successfully on previous work. This approach is rightly to be extended to Years 3 to 6. The school has recognised that many pupils benefit from learning through practical tasks and is adapting the curriculum accordingly. However, not all pupils feel confident in working in this independent way. Basic skills are promoted satisfactorily through other subjects but an over-reliance on worksheets is occasionally a hindrance. Strategies to address the weaknesses in mathematics and develop investigations in science have resulted in improved standards this year. Teachers are now helping lower attaining pupils to achieve satisfactorily but provision for more able pupils is not challenging enough. A good personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' personal development well.

Many additional activities including trips and sports clubs enrich learning well. Good links with other schools and the local community provide pupils with experiences of life beyond the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils trust the adults that work with them and know they can ask for help if problems arise. They learn how to live healthy lives and stay safe. Procedures for child protection, health and safety and safeguarding pupils are all secure, as are those for the reporting of racial incidents. Prompt action is taken if issues arise.

Pupils' attainment is tracked carefully to check they make satisfactory gains. Effective action is taken to support pupils who need specific help and external agencies contacted if appropriate. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because they receive the help they need. However, the targets teachers set pupils are very broad and generalised. These targets do not challenge, for example the more able pupils, enough. Because pupils do not have personal targets, they are not always sure of what they are trying to achieve or what steps they need to take to improve their work. While there is evidence of good practice in advising pupils through marking, this practice is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has rekindled parents' confidence in the school and they are very supportive of the action she has taken to improve provision. She has generated good teamwork

and made improving pupils' achievement a high priority. Through her skilful analysis of the school's performance and the corrective action taken she has addressed weaknesses and the decline in standards has been arrested. Pupils' behaviour has also improved, as has their attendance, indicating that they want to be at the school and want to learn.

Middle managers actively support the changes but are not sufficiently involved in checking that the teaching in their subjects is good enough to secure better progress. Governors carry out their duties satisfactorily but are not involved enough in monitoring the school's performance. Nevertheless, the issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed and, recent improvements are having a positive impact on raising standards. Teaching in mathematics and science has improved as has provision in the Foundation Stage. Good partnerships with other schools have resulted in better provision for physical education. The introduction of healthy lunches has been a popular move. These successes demonstrate the leadership and management's capacity to move the school forward.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willoughton Primary School, Willoughton, DN21 5RT

I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school when I visited recently to look at your work and talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting such friendly and polite young people - you made me feel very welcome. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about what they think of the school. I am pleased they like it. Thank you also for inviting me to join you for lunch and reminding me to eat healthy food. I think we all enjoyed the delicious fruit and yoghurt. I am sorry I could not spend longer in your lessons but I am pleased you like school.

The school on the whole is satisfactory but some things are good and some need improving.

- You try your best and get the results we expect from children of your age. Your results in mathematics and science have improved this year and are nearly as good as those in English because teaching has improved.
- The work you do in all the subjects is satisfactory and all the additional clubs, the interesting visitors and visits you have are good.
- The school takes good care of you and your teachers listen to you and help you if you have problems.
- You behave well, look after each other and know how to stay fit and healthy.
- The headteacher has made improvements in the school such as organising school dinners for you, helping you set up a school shop and making sure that all your lessons are now satisfactory.

These are the three things I have asked your teachers and governors to do to improve your school.

- They should set you harder work so that you learn even more in all your lessons.
- They should give you more advice about how you can improve your work.
- They should check what happens in the lessons in all the subjects to see that things are improving.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you understand what you have to do to get better results and ask if the school is improving.

I am pleased you are happy at school and have good friends there. I hope that you continue to do well.

Yours sincerely Rajinder Harrison (Lead inspector)