

Willingham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110622
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310367
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	John Francis

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	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob Laycock
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Brearley
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	Thoday's Close Willingham Cambridge CB4 5LE
Telephone number	01954 283030
Fax number	01954 283029

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The following issues were inspected: the quality of pupils' personal development, the quality of the curriculum, the care and guidance of pupils and the impact of monitoring and evaluation on pupils' progress, particularly in English. Evidence was gathered from observing work in classrooms, scrutinising school documentation and records of pupils' achievement and progress, discussions with senior leaders in the school and with pupils and the views of parents through the questionnaire returns. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few at the early stages of learning English. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. Attainment on entry to school is typical of this age group. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but for those who have statements of special educational needs, this is above average.

The school has a number of awards including the Silver Arts Mark award, a Quality Skills Mark, Eco bronze award, NAACE (Information and communication technology) Mark and is a Health Promoting School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school, particularly the quality of teaching and the school's leadership. In addition, many made extremely positive comments about their children's academic and personal development saying, 'This is a school where learning is made fun and achievement in a wide variety of fields is celebrated'. A very small minority expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour but the inspection found nothing to support this and judged behaviour to be excellent. The whole, positive ethos of the school is the result of the headteacher's outstanding leadership and guidance, well supported by all staff, and an active and exceptionally knowledgeable governing body.

In line with the school's own accurate evaluation of its effectiveness, the inspection judges this a school that provides a good education for its pupils. Pupils are achieving well and on track to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. There are particular strengths in the teaching of mathematics following the strong focus on this since the last inspection. National test results for mathematics in 2007 were well above average with almost twice the national average attaining the higher level 5. From their high level in 2006, results in English fell in 2007. The school's rigorous monitoring enabled it to respond quickly and positively and a detailed analysis of pupils' writing led to a range of changes, including subject leadership and teaching approaches. These have had a very positive impact and pupils are again making good progress. However, these changes are still being phased in and continue to be area of focus in the drive to bring writing standards up to the high levels seen in reading and mathematics.

The school also gives a strong emphasis to developing the whole pupil. It fully lives up to its motto of 'Care, Courtesy, Consideration, and Cooperation'. A purposeful approach, clearly defined culture and the commitment of all staff result in outstanding personal development. The school's awards for health and environmental issues reflect this commitment. The impact of this, seen across the school, is rooted in the excellent provision for personal development made for children in the Reception classes. Pupils are polite and friendly and have extremely positive attitudes to the school and each other. Excellent provision has led to outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and benefit from a wide range of cultural experiences through music and art.

There are outstanding systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety. These are securely in place and regularly reviewed. Attendance, however, remains average despite the school's concerted efforts. Some of this is due to families moving in and out of the area but parents taking children on holiday during term time also adversely affect it. Teaching is good and parents commented on the 'approachability, commitment and enthusiasm' of the staff at the school: a view strongly shared by pupils. Well-planned lessons and good teaching ensure pupils make good progress. There are good systems for assessing, recording and tracking pupils' progress. However, not all teachers make full use of all of this information in their planning. The pupils themselves have a good understanding of what they can do, their own targets, and what they need to do to further improve their work. Good, informative marking encourages pupils and guides their progress. As a result, they are confident and well motivated. Well-targeted support for those pupils who have learning difficulties ensures that most makes good progress and generally achieve above the average for this group of pupils nationally. This is similar to the picture for Traveller children. Good support systems and carefully matched provision enable them to achieve well.

An exceptionally good curriculum, which benefits from specialist teaching in a number of subjects, provides further strength to the work of the school. Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly the opportunities for practical and investigative activities that ensure they gain a full understanding of what they study. There is a clear focus on pupils becoming life-long learners and pupils say they get great enjoyment from their learning. They develop thinking skills, independence and self-esteem. There is a good range of extension and enrichment activities, which are very popular and exceptionally well supported by the pupils. Pupils make extremely positive contributions to their school community and to the community at large. Through the wide range of responsibilities they take on such as being 'playground buddies', or part of the school council or the 'Green Team', their personal development is outstanding. All of these activities contribute to pupils' outstanding preparation for their future well-being.

Through effective leadership at all levels, the school has made good progress since its last inspection, particularly in its development of mathematics and information and communication technology, and has a good capacity for continuing improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The management of the Foundation Stage is very good and imaginative teaching is creating wonderful opportunities for children in the Reception classes. Children make good progress, particularly in their personal development. The strong emphasis on personal, social and health education gives children a good understanding of what they need to do to stay healthy and form positive relationships. With the whole-school drive to improve literacy, children make excellent progress in their knowledge of letters and their sounds (phonics). Because of the good provision, most children reach, or exceed, the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1. Improvements to the outdoor provision enable children to make full use of these at all times. Secure recording and tracking systems enable teachers and teaching assistants to extend children's skills and understanding. There is further work to do to this in finalising a system for recording the daily achievements of the children, if this is to feed through into even more precise planning for individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the phased approach to improving pupils' writing and ensure a close link between the literacy skills taught and their use in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve attendance and punctuality and ensure parents are aware of their impact on the school's drive to raise standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willingham Primary School, Cambridge, CB24 5LE

Many of you will remember that I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making me so welcome. All of you that I talked with were very keen to share your work and ideas and this letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

I certainly agree with your view that you go to a good school. Mrs Brearley and all of the adults in school take good care of you and work very hard to make your school an exciting and interesting place to come to. All of you make an excellent contribution to your school. Many of you work very hard to help others and improve your school and you carry out your tasks extremely well. I particularly liked the assembly by the Green Team and the wonderful instrumental playing and singing. You are growing into very sensible and responsible young people, well done. You told me how much you enjoyed school, how teachers made your lessons interesting and how you work hard and try your best. I can see this in the way you listen carefully and the good work you do. I really liked the way you worked together and helped each other. You also told me that everyone in school gets on well and I can see this in the way you work and play together: your behaviour is excellent.

To help you get even better in your English I have asked the teachers to give you even more opportunity to improve your writing. You can do your bit by asking your parents to make sure you come to school as regularly as you can to enjoy all of the exciting things going on. I wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard and get even better.

John Francis

Lead inspector