

Willington C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114216
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	311517
Inspection date	24 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Shepherd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy Middleton
Headteacher	Mr Bill Guymer
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
School address	Hall Lane Willington Crook County Durham DL15 0QH
Telephone number	01388 746426
Fax number	01388 748242

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how effectively the strong emphasis on information and communication technology (ICT) impacts on pupils' learning and the school's overall provision; the quality of the outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage; the quality of pupils' contributions to the community. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons, an assembly, a performance by the school choir, lunchtime and playground arrangements. Discussions were held with pupils generally, two Year 6 pupils who showed the range of their work on their individual laptops, members of the school council, staff, the senior leadership team and governors. A scrutiny was carried out of pupils' written work and their work on computers, pupil assessment and tracking systems, key documents and data, which included the school's self-evaluation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the majority of the school's own judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves as area with lower social and economic circumstances than usual. Almost all pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an excellent school, which parents really appreciate. A typical comment was, 'I have every confidence in the school's ability to provide a safe and stimulating environment where children can flourish ... my children have thrived in the school.' The key reason for its success is the quality of the headteacher. He has a strong belief in the importance of developing every aspect of each pupil's potential. He manages change extremely skilfully and the entire school team work tirelessly to continually improve and extend the school's provision. This has ensured the school has sustained its outstanding provision from the previous inspection, has raised standards still further and has an excellent capacity for future improvement. It provides excellent value for money.

The school's high priority on developing pupils' ICT skills and using computers as a tool for delivering excellence in basic skills of literacy and numeracy is extremely successful. Standards in ICT are much higher than expected from a very early age. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they handle animations and editing with great confidence and use their personal laptops with enormous skill. This has a huge impact on standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Achievement is outstanding. Children enter the school with skills below those usually expected. They make consistently excellent progress throughout the school. By the end of Reception, standards are as expected and are higher than expected in language, literacy and ICT. Standards are significantly higher than average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. National tests show that these standards have been consistently maintained over time. National data also show that the school is one of the best in the country for adding value in standards between Year 2 and Year 6. By the time pupils leave the school, a much higher proportion than average reach the higher standards of Level 5 in English, mathematics and science.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are all excellent. High quality partnerships between teachers and support staff benefit all pupils. This is particularly noticeable for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They make excellent progress. The outstanding provision of computers throughout the school and individual laptops for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 works extremely well. Teachers use ICT extremely effectively to promote learning. They make sure the focus of the lesson is on the skills within different subjects and use computers as tools to enhance the quality of learning. For example, in Year 2 pupils produced PowerPoint presentations confidently with a wide range of different effects, but were very clear that the main focus for their learning was using adjectives. Teachers use ICT extremely well for the older pupils. They provide electronic comments of how to improve pieces of work; pupils then modify their work and the teachers check the amendments. The school is continually working to extend its provision. For example, there is a very exciting pilot in place where pupils are marking their own work electronically. Homework is excellent and supports learning very effectively. The curriculum is lively and relevant for both academic and personal development.

The school places a high priority on care, support and guidance. These are excellent and based on high quality relationships between staff and pupils. This results in outstanding personal development with individuals developing very high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils become mature and responsible citizens. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and have extremely positive attitudes towards school. They make excellent contributions to the school, local and international communities. School councillors take their responsibilities extremely seriously and expect to make decisions that affect the whole school. Links with a school in Tanzania are very productive. Both parents and pupils appreciate all the opportunities in creating the

partnership between the two schools. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There is a clear Christian ethos and pupils show great sensitivity during occasions such as assemblies, or when singing in the choir. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is outstanding. They develop high levels of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, learn to work in teams effectively, to make decisions and cooperate with each other to complete tasks independently. Behaviour is excellent, whether in lessons, around the school or at playtimes.

Leadership and management are excellent. The partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is extremely productive. Together they drive improvements forward, whilst sustaining the quality of systems that are already in place. Monitoring of teaching and learning is high quality and there are very efficient tracking systems to check pupils' progress. The deployment of staff is extremely efficient and makes the best use of everyone's strengths. The programme of staff development is rigorous, with a clear focus on whole school initiatives. Safeguarding systems are in place. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's work. The school sets itself challenging targets and then works systematically towards achieving them. This gives pupils an excellent foundation to build on in their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of the Foundation Stage is good with many outstanding features. The coordinator has an extremely clear vision of the principles for teaching this age group and a determination to improve provision further. The teaching team of new and longer-serving staff work extremely well together. Children make consistently good progress, with excellent progress in language, literacy and ICT. This is due to a strong emphasis on introducing children to new language through exciting experiences and listening very carefully to their responses. ICT provision is outstanding. Children handle computers with great confidence. Teaching and learning are excellent, with highly effective partnerships between teachers and support staff. The excellent indoor curriculum has a careful balance between children's own choices and adult-led activities. Teachers provide relevant and exciting learning opportunities, such as making healthy soup or writing postcards home from children's camping holiday role-play. Staff organise resources extremely well to ensure children develop independence. For example, two children carefully selected a range of materials in order to construct a teddy bear's bed. The outdoor provision is less well balanced and this influences children's progress. Care, support and guidance are excellent and result in outstanding progress in personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the range of the outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

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

25 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willington C of E Primary School, Durham, DL15 0QH

I would like to thank you for all the help you gave me to help me understand what is special about your school. I am writing to let you know what I found out during the day.

I agree with you that you have an outstanding school. You all work extremely hard and this means that you make excellent progress as you move through the school.

You make an excellent start when you are learning indoors in Nursery and Reception and your school is going to make your outdoor learning even better. When you leave in Year 6, your standards are much higher than average, with many of you reaching higher levels than expected in English, mathematics and science. There are many reasons why you do so well. Your headteacher works extremely effectively to help all your staff to keep making your school even better. For example, the school helps you develop excellent skills in ICT. You learn about handling computers right from the very beginning in the Nursery and by Year 2 you are handling programs that are usually learnt by much older pupils. The way that you do most of your work on your own laptops in Years 4, 5 and 6 is extremely impressive, as are the skills you have in animation and editing. Your school's staff is excellent. They work very well together to help you improve. They use computers extremely effectively to identify how to make your work even better. The school's systems for homework are very good.

The school takes very good care of you and your personal development is outstanding. Your behaviour is excellent and you develop into mature and responsible citizens. Your school councillors are very impressive. They told me all about the wonderful links you have with the school in Tanzania. You have an excellent understanding of cultural issues and your spiritual, moral and social development is equally good. I was very impressed with your assembly and the singing of the choir was very moving.

Your school prepares you extremely well for your future lives and I wish every one of you the very best as you continue your journey of learning.

Yours sincerely

Maggi Shepherd

Lead inspector