

Willington Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 114066 |
| Local Authority | Durham |
| Inspection number | 325936 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 October 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Scott |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 221 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Mike Treasure |
| Headteacher | Mr Stephen Cornforth |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Chapel Street Willington Crook County Durham DL15 0EQ |
| Telephone number | 01388 746414 |
| Fax number | 01388 745 658 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is in a small town where there is some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. Almost all pupils are from White British families. A high percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher has been in post for just over two terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory education but with good features, especially the care it takes of its pupils and their personal development. In addition, the good leadership of the new headteacher is introducing fresh new ideas and procedures which are giving an impetus to staff and pupils alike. Parents appreciate his impact and the welcoming, supportive ethos of the school. A comment in one of the parents' questionnaires typified the views of others: 'We find the school friendly and inviting. Our children always go to school happily'.

Attendance figures, which have improved since the last inspection, are now in line with average and show that pupils enjoy school. They develop well, especially socially and morally, understanding the need for consideration and responsibility. This is obvious in their appreciation of a healthy diet and exercise. Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe, knowing full well that any aggressive incidents are swiftly dealt with. Pupils co-operate sensibly in lessons, although not all are good at working without direct supervision. The school council is effective; interaction with the local and world communities is underdeveloped but improving. Overall, pupils have a satisfactory grounding to enable them to cope with life ahead.

The achievement of all pupils, whatever their abilities, is satisfactory. They begin school with skills and abilities that are much lower than is typical for their age and leave Year 6 with below average standards, although these vary. For example, standards in English and science were average in 2007. Provisional data suggest that they slipped in 2008 in all subjects mainly because of the extremely high incidence of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A similar situation in Year 2 was partly the reason why standards in that group were low this year, although they were broadly average in 2007. Improved staff morale and more effective teaching are beginning to influence pupils' learning and there is clear evidence that pupils in both Years 2 and 6 are on track to achieve average standards in the coming year.

Teaching is satisfactory and often good. Led by the headteacher, teachers have successfully improved pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a result, classrooms have a positive working environment. Teachers present new learning clearly and use resources well to motivate pupils. Making fruit kebabs certainly sharpened Year 2 pupils' interest when learning instructional writing. Teachers vary the work for pupils of different abilities but not decisively enough. All pupils often do similar work, so the pace of work is too slow for more able pupils and less able pupils have to rely on adult support. The curriculum is satisfactory, but teachers tend to follow set guidelines and do not diversify classroom experiences enough so that pupils' learning is broader.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has made a good start by swiftly identifying areas to develop and taking decisive action, notably in behaviour and parental links. He has enabled senior staff to take more responsibility. The school knows itself well, but its plans for improvement are not rooted enough in rigorous analysis, and monitoring of action plans by all senior staff and governors is not robust enough.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Assessment systems have increased in rigour since the last inspection and now confirm that children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. They enter school with particular weaknesses in language and communication, and in their personal

and social development. They make good progress because the curriculum and the teaching input by the whole team are good, and most children reach the goals expected of five year olds.

Children flourish in the nurturing and stimulating environment provided. There are always good, stimulating activities in all areas of learning and a strong focus on learning through independent play. Well planned activities and close interaction with adults enable children to strengthen their speaking and listening. Children are taught how to deal with safety issues and become aware of others' needs. They are able to take responsibility for small tasks and are beginning to develop good learning skills. They behave well and become increasingly confident individuals. The leadership and management are good. Skilled and experienced staff plan well together as a team and have a clear understanding about how young children learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' work fully matches their capabilities.
- Establish a more diverse and stimulating curriculum to strengthen pupils' basic skills and knowledge of the wider world.
- Ensure greater rigour in analysing and monitoring the school's development at all levels of management.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards on entry to Year 1 are currently average. In 2007, standards by the end of Year 2 rose in comparison to previous years and were broadly average. In 2008, provisional data showed that they were similar in mathematics but were low in reading and writing; nevertheless, this represents satisfactory progress from these pupils' starting points. The school's data and inspection evidence show that pupils in the current Year 2 are on track to reach average levels in all subjects.

Standards by the end of Year 6 have been average in recent years, although a little lower in 2007 especially in mathematics. The school identified mental agility as a weakness, and has been striving to improve it. Unvalidated data indicate that standards were lower in 2008. In this year group, over half of the pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and there had been some staffing instability in the school. Even so, achievement is consistently satisfactory through Key Stage 2. Pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are on course to attain broadly average standards.

There are some disparities between groups, but little of significance other than a comparative weakness in boys' writing that the school is already addressing. Whilst pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their social and behavioural development, their academic achievement is satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. One said, 'We miss school when on holiday'. This is reflected in their attendance which is average, following a dramatic improvement last year when it was even higher. Most pupils have a good rapport with adults and each other. They feel safe at school and have few concerns about bullying, confident in the school's capacity to deal promptly and effectively with any misbehaviour. They themselves look after one another through an effective 'buddy' system in the playground.

Pupils know their views matter through the work of the school council. They develop responsibility in such activities as running the healthy tuck shop. Pupils know that a healthy lifestyle 'helps us grow and be strong' – more than watching TV does! They particularly enjoy the opportunities for sport and other clubs. Community links are improving through Harvest Festival activities, a Parents Enterprise Group and 'Family Learning' projects. A community room has recently opened for parents to use during the school day. New links with Tanzania and New York are destined to develop pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies promote reflection but not enough scope exists in lessons. All in all, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, with some good practice throughout the school. In all classrooms, pupils are keen to learn and are attentive because teachers manage behaviour well and give clear directions. Through careful questioning and gentle encouragement, teachers ensure that all pupils are equally involved. Teaching assistants give pupils close support in their work, and especially in their personal and social development. Teachers present new learning skilfully, aided by the interactive whiteboards, and are increasingly using interesting resources and topics to motivate learning. A pirate theme, complete with skull and hidden treasure, certainly raised interest in a Year 5 English lesson. However, many activities are too routine and undemanding.

Usually, teachers plan lessons with different challenges for pupils of different abilities. However, the range and variety of work are not consistently distinct enough to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Sometimes the work is methodical, well suited to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but not challenging enough for others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and firmly linked to national frameworks and schemes of work. A clear focus on basic skills in language and mathematics allows extra scope for pupils to improve reading, spelling, handwriting and times tables. Good provision for social development promotes pupils' awareness of personal health and safety, and has improved behaviour around school.

The school is beginning to introduce a richer and more interesting curriculum for pupils. The many clubs after school are well supported, and the frequent visits and visitors enhance learning experiences. The Year 5 field trip to the coast at Seaham, for example, certainly brought learning

alive, especially among the rock pools. Similarly exciting activities are beginning to enrich lessons, but are not yet frequent enough to give pupils a broader awareness of the world, to strengthen their vocabulary and develop a zest for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are right to appreciate the good quality of care for their children. Teachers know the personal circumstances of all pupils well, and respond decisively to any concerns. Effective links with outside agencies support vulnerable pupils and those requiring additional support at different stages of their school life. The required procedures for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection are in place. Systems to reward good behaviour and attendance are successful.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Good new procedures have recently been established to track pupils' progress and to provide feedback on their performance. However, it is too soon to judge the overall impact on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. Good leadership by the recently appointed headteacher has led to some improvements especially in pupils' behaviour. He has strengthened the roles and influence of the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, and ensured that all staff share a common vision. Parents have been quick to praise the headteacher's impact, and the school's reputation in the community is rising.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher clearly understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school but the rest of the leadership team has not yet had time to fully develop monitoring and evaluation skills. Analyses of aspects of the school are not sufficiently precise or evaluative. For example, teachers' planning was reported as showing that pupils of different abilities were fully provided for, but there was no indication as to whether this was effective enough. Similarly, action plans for development are too broad and do not spell out exactly what needs to be fixed and why. Governors are supportive of the school but are not pro-active enough in the school's development.

The school has made steady progress since the last inspection and is now beginning to tackle issues in a more determined way. Standards are similar, and the positive ethos of care and support has been maintained. The issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. There is a fresh feel about the school and it is beginning to believe more in itself and improve, although its capacity to improve is satisfactory at present. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| 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? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willington Primary School, Durham, DL15 0EQ

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. Mrs Graham and I enjoyed our time in your school, meeting you and the staff. Your comments have really helped us get to know your school.

We feel that your school gives you a satisfactory education with some good features. We especially like the good support and care that you receive from all the staff. This helps you to become good citizens within your school, helping one another and taking responsibility for your actions. We know behaviour is not perfect, but it is good overall. Your attendance shows how much you enjoy school and you mostly have an interest in your work. We feel, though, that you need to learn more about your local community and the world at large.

In your work, progress is satisfactory. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because of good teaching and learning experiences. Standards elsewhere are a bit below what they could be, but Mrs Graham and I saw that an improvement is on the cards for this coming year. There is every indication that standards will be average at Years 2 and 6, because you are working well and teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers are beginning to introduce more exciting activities into lessons to motivate you and improve your basic skills. We have asked them to make sure this happens most of the time. In addition, we have asked that you are given work that fully matches your abilities, so that all of you feel really challenged. We are confident that you will respond well and so make better progress in your learning.

Mr Cornforth has brought in some good ideas in his short time at the school. All staff share these ideas and so things are starting to improve. For example, he is already involving parents more with your work, so that you will have extra support at home. However, some changes are not happening as quickly as they might. As a result, we would like all senior staff and governors to be sure that they have exactly the right plans for your school and check that all activities are going to help you directly.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector