

Willesborough Infant School

Church Road, Willesborough, Ashford, Kent, TN24 0JZ

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. She inspires all around her to be ambitious for pupils and for the school.
- Leaders and governors have secured rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, which is better than it was at the last inspection.
- Teaching is now good and some is outstanding. This ensures that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve well by the end of Year 2.
- Steadily rising standards over the past three years ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Year 2 increased in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress, both academically and socially. The very few gaps with pupils nationally are marginal.
- Pupils behave well. They work and play together harmoniously. The school looks after them carefully so that they are safe.
- The recently appointed foundation stage leader has brought about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes, and excellent progress in writing.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' and leaders' enthusiasm for learning is infectious. The curriculum is taught in a highly imaginative way to capture and build on pupils' interests. Pupils love school and are excited about all it has to offer.
- Teachers use good quality marking to provide clear feedback to pupils about their work and about what they can do to improve.
- Governors share the headteacher's high expectations. They work closely with senior leaders to ensure teaching is good.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Some teachers do not take every opportunity to extend pupils' learning when they have completed tasks. . This means that pupils in these classes make less progress than they could.
- Pupils' progress is not as rapid in writing. This is particularly the case for pupils in Key Stage 1 and for the most able.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons or part lessons, including seven observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, parents and carers and pupils. Discussions were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, they spoke with individual parents and carers informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 42 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as in lessons. They also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kumwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
Alison Botarelli	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. Pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in four Reception classes.
- The school has a breakfast club, which caters for children in Reception Year, and an after-school club, both of which are managed and run by the school. The breakfast club was visited during the inspection.
- The school is a member of the Ashford Teaching Alliance, a group of seven schools in the local authority.
- The headteacher joined the school since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of teaching and achievement further by ensuring that:
 - all teachers provide appropriate activities to extend all pupils, especially the most able, to learn as much as they can
 - pupils in Key Stage 1 and the most able pupils in both key stages, make more rapid progress in writing

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has secured rapid improvements in the school's work since her appointment in 2014. Her strong commitment to equal opportunities, and to ensuring that all pupils achieve well, is shared by all her staff. Improved teaching is eradicating pockets of underachievement caused by some weaker teaching in the past. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are quickly catching up with where they should be at this stage in their schooling. The headteacher's success and the school's excellent capacity to build on this success are clearly evident in improving standards and in the school's upbeat atmosphere.
- The headteacher has introduced a confidence and self-belief in her staff which has lifted staff morale since her appointment. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. The strength of teamwork in the school is one of the keys to its success. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about developments in the school and are highly motivated to play their part in its future.
- Middle leaders have a confident grasp of their subject areas. They work closely with senior leaders to improve teaching and learning. For example, the phonics (the sounds letters make) and English leaders have worked effectively with staff to overhaul topics, introducing more stimulating opportunities for pupils to write.
- Parents and carers recognise and appreciate improvements, including more contact with teachers and leaders. Events such as 'Walk-in Wednesdays' and 'Big Breakfasts' are very popular, with 200 parents and carers typically attending the breakfast events. Parents and carers have opportunities to see their children's work, speak with teachers about children's learning and find out what they can do to help at home. All parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school.
- The school is committed to making learning memorable. The school's motto, 'Wonder – Inspire – Shine', characterises the way subjects are taught in a stimulating, fun and meaningful way. An extensive range of events and experiences ignites pupils' excitement about learning, from Reception Year through to Year 2.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and well defined, so that teachers are confident about what they need to teach. Information and communication technology is used well to engage pupils in learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils confidently used e-tablets to find out facts about the Earth.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about different beliefs and faiths and pupils are respectful of different views. The school is committed to equal opportunities and to the promotion of good relationships, which it does very successfully. Pupils know the effect kind and unkind words can have on others and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils learn about British values, such as justice and tolerance, throughout the curriculum. Special events, such as elections for the school council, help pupils to understand about the importance of democracy and help them to develop a sense of personal responsibility.
- The local authority knows the school well and provides effective support. The current headteacher's initial involvement and effective support for the school was brokered by the local authority.
- The headteacher provides a strong steer for rapid improvements in teaching. Effective training for teachers and other members of staff makes a strong contribution to the quality of teaching.
- The school is actively involved in the Ashford Teaching Alliance, a group of schools committed to sharing and developing good practice in the locality. In addition, there are a number of teachers in the school who are recognised as Specialist Leaders of Education (SLEs). They use their expertise very well to provide coaching and mentoring for their colleagues.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used wisely to close gaps in achievement when compared with other pupils. Individual pupils' progress is carefully checked so that teachers and leaders are clear about how successfully support is helping each pupil to learn.
- The additional primary sports funding is used well to increase pupils' participation in sport. Leaders have introduced a wide range of clubs, so that many more pupils participate in sport than previously.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are well managed. Children attending the breakfast club enjoy a healthy breakfast. Relationships between the children and adults are very good.
- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met in full and are effective in keeping pupils safe. There are good links with external agencies such as social services and health professionals.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because small variations in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement remain.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors comment on the 'phenomenal change' in the school since the current headteacher's

appointment and the positive impact this has had on staff morale and pupils' learning. Their own role in the school's development has increased substantially. For example, governors are more closely involved in discussions with leaders about the school's work. Consequently they have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to secure the highest levels of achievement. They are more confident about asking challenging questions of school leaders than at the time of the last inspection.

- Governors regularly visit the school and discuss what they have seen with school leaders. As a result, they have a good grasp of the quality of teaching across the school. Good training, including meetings and discussions with local schools, means that governors use data about pupils' achievement more effectively. As a result, they have a better understanding of the school's performance in relation to other schools. They know what leaders are doing to check staff performance and to make further improvements in teaching and learning. They are involved in discussing procedures for salary progression and pay awards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They come into school eagerly in the morning and are happy and relaxed. They look very smart in their school uniform.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They are respectful and welcoming and like talking to visitors about their work. They enjoy receiving reward stickers for their achievements and their behaviour. All staff and almost all parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire feel that behaviour is good.
- Adults supervise pupils very well in the dining hall and during playtimes. They organise and lead games in the playground and chat with the pupils. This supports the development of pupils' personal and social skills well and ensures playtimes are happy and positive times in the school day.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attend regularly. There are robust procedures to check attendance and follow up any unexplained absences. This ensures that pupils are safe and attending as regularly as possible. The attendance officer and family liaison officer work closely with families and agencies to support pupils' attendance, punctuality and well-being. Attendance is average and improving.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their good progress. They are keen to make the most of their time in school and say that their teachers are helpful.
- Pupils treat the environment and living creatures with respect. For example, during the inspection, a reception child who was watching a caterpillar in a jar with intense concentration explained the need to treat it with great care, so that when it turns into a butterfly the class can watch it fly away.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because sometimes a few pupils lose focus and disengage during lessons, so that they make slightly slower progress than the others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Effective safeguarding procedures ensure there is a good focus on keeping pupils safe. Adults are caring and attentive and relationships are good.
- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and care about their friends and classmates. Events such as 'Friendship Week' help pupils to consider how they can be a good friend.
- The school ensures that pupils learn about internet safety through a range of different subjects. They have a secure understanding of different forms of bullying. Bullying is rarely an issue. Leaders deal sensitively and effectively with the very few incidents that occur.
- All parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire feel that pupils are happy and safe in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils want to learn because teachers make lessons interesting and fun. Teachers make good use of the special events to engage pupils. For example, during the inspection, pupils thoroughly enjoyed visiting the 'science dome' in the school hall, an experience which strengthened their understanding of space.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Teachers use a wide range of high-quality books during Reception Year which instil children's love of reading. Teaching builds well on pupils' reading skills in Years 1 and 2. Teachers think of imaginative ways to motivate pupils to read. For example, pupils very much enjoy taking turns to read to a teaching assistant and her pet dog. This activity helps to develop their self-esteem as

well as practising reading skills.

- Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to talk about their ideas before writing them down and to read their work when completed. The school's approach is helping pupils to write more purposefully and identify errors more easily for themselves.
- Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to use practical equipment in mathematics to deepen their mathematical understanding. They plan work well which gives pupils the basic skills they need to solve problems confidently.
- Teachers ensure pupils understand how to improve their work. For example, pupils have their own targets for writing and mathematics. They know their targets and are confident about what they need to do to be successful. For example, during the inspection, some pupils told inspectors that they are trying hard to remember to use finger spaces in their writing.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers usually provide pupils of differing abilities with work which is sufficiently demanding. However, occasionally teachers miss opportunities to provide extra challenge for the most able in order to deepen and extend their understanding, particularly in writing.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils of all abilities. For example, during the inspection, a teaching assistant provided additional challenge to the most able pupils in a mathematics lesson by setting extra problems to solve when she realised that they had completed their work. The appointment of a teaching assistant as a 'Pupil Premium Champion' in each year group ensures a strong and highly successful focus on ensuring that these pupils do their best.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported. Teaching assistants understand pupils' needs and complement teachers' work in the classroom well, in addition to supporting small groups outside lessons.
- There are small variations in the quality of teaching between different classes. Where teaching is less effective, pupils make slightly slower progress as they sometimes wait for others in the class to catch up with them. Occasionally, they are given extra work when they complete a task, which does little to extend their thinking or strengthen their skills.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Improved teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in 2014. The school predicts further increases in standards in writing and mathematics in 2015, while above average attainment in reading is on track to be sustained. Assessment information and pupils' work support the school's forecasts.
- Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in reading throughout the school. Attainment in reading is higher than in writing and mathematics and is well above average by the end of Year 2. By Year 2, pupils draw on a range of strategies to help them if they get stuck on a word. They confidently use books to find information. Pupils' phonics skills are improving. In 2014, the results of the Year 1 phonics check improved, although they were still below national levels.
- Improved teaching is leading to good achievement in mathematics. Pupils confidently use practical resources to count and to complete calculations. This is strengthening their understanding of mathematical concepts, from the youngest children to those in Year 2. Improved information for parents and carers is helping them to reinforce their children's learning in school. Attainment in mathematics was broadly average in 2014, including the proportion attaining the higher levels.
- Pupils make good and improving progress in writing during Key Stage 1, although it is not as strong as their progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils take care to present their work tidily. Carefully focused teaching in Year 2 is quickly addressing any gaps in pupils' skills due to weaker teaching in the past and this is lifting attainment. In 2014, attainment at the end of Year 2 increased to average levels. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels was below average in 2014, despite an increase on the previous year.
- Rapid improvements in teaching mean that teachers have much higher expectations of the most able pupils. As a result, they are making better progress than previously. However, occasionally teachers set work which is not challenging enough to ensure that these pupils achieve even higher, particularly in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make rapid progress. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils has closed completely. This builds on the school's previous success in steadily improving this group's achievement over the past three years. In 2014, their attainment was in line with the national average at the end of Year 2.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Effective training ensures that teachers and teaching assistants understand pupils' needs and they provide good quality support, both in lessons and when working in small groups. In 2014, they attained above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Leaders and teachers carefully consider pupils' needs, so that the extra help provided works well and meets their specific needs.
- There are small differences in pupils' progress in different classes due to variations in the quality of teaching. Leaders identify this as a priority for development. They recognise that teachers' expectations now need to keep pace with rising standards, as pupils move up through the year groups with stronger skills and understanding.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are in line with those typical for their age. In 2014, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year was average. Substantial improvements in teaching mean that children make much faster progress during the early years than they did at the time of the last inspection. All children, including those with special educational needs and the most able, make good progress, so that most are well prepared for learning in Year 1. Children's work indicates that standards are set to rise in 2015.
- The early years team is passionate about its role in getting children off to the best possible start in their schooling. Warm relationships and good arrangements to settle children into school routines mean that children feel safe and confidently approach adults if they need help. They are enthused about school and behave well.
- Children make excellent progress in the development of writing skills. Adults make sure that children hear and use an increasingly wide vocabulary, which they then try out in their writing. There are many interesting and appealing opportunities for children to write. For example, during the inspection, children were delighted about the arrival of an author's letter and went on to tackle a subsequent writing activity enthusiastically. The school's success is evident in children's high-quality written work.
- Classroom areas are well organised, safe and very attractive, both inside and outdoors. Adults plan a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities which enthuse children and support the development of basic skills very successfully.
- Children routinely make choices about their learning and do so sensibly. This responsibility helps them to grow in confidence and to develop important personal and social skills. For example, during the inspection, children were very clear about what they were going to do and were itching to get started because they had discussed their plans with adults and each other first.
- The early years leader provides strong leadership. She works closely with the headteacher and the early years team. Leaders embrace the challenge to ensure that teaching continues to build securely on rapidly improving standards, particularly for the most able. The local authority has identified the school's early years department as an exemplar of good practice in the locality.
- The quality of teaching in early years is good and some is outstanding. At times, teachers miss opportunities to extend children's learning by setting them more demanding tasks. Additional adults work closely with teachers so that they are clear about children's needs. Good quality training ensures they play an active and confident role in supporting children's learning.
- Parents and carers say that they are very happy with the school. They feel that they are given helpful information about their children's learning and their children are keen to go into school each morning.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118370
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	462406

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liesl York
Headteacher	Fran Rusbridge
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 April 2013
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