

# Willen Primary School

Beaufort Drive, Milton Keynes, MK15 9HN

**Inspection dates** 29–30 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have successfully tackled past weaknesses to improve the school's effectiveness.
- Pupils achieve well, particularly in their speaking, listening, writing and basic number work. Writing skills are used well across different subjects.
- Additional activities directed at providing support for those pupils who find learning difficult, and pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, are effective so that these pupils also achieve well.
- The Reception classes give children a happy and secure foundation for their future learning.
- Leaders check teaching quality regularly which has helped to improve it, and consequently achievement, to typically good levels.
- As a result of the improvements in teaching, lessons are now lively, engaging and cater effectively for most pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils typically behave well, enjoy contributing to the life of the school and say they feel safe.
- Governors support the school well and are regular visitors who aid improvement. They have supported other leaders well in securing improvements to teaching and achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes the pace of learning slows, and more able pupils in particular are not always stretched to do their very best.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to help pupils develop their investigative skills in mathematics.
- Although pupils achieve well in their information and communication technology work (ICT), there are not always enough opportunities in day-to-day work to use their ICT skills.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all 14 classes. They visited 18 lessons or part lessons. Three were observed jointly with senior leaders, and many activities related to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs were observed.
- The inspection team held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, staff, and a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement consultant. They looked at documents, including the school plans for improvement, safeguarding information, recent local authority reviews, assessment records, attendance information and the school's checks and information on pupils' progress.
- Inspectors met with a representative group of pupils, heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6, observed lunchtimes, playtimes and two assemblies. They looked at the past work of pupils in Years 2 and 6 as well as other work during lesson observations.
- Account was taken of the responses in 31 questionnaires completed by members of staff and 73 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

Kevin Hodge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anna Majcher	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is bigger than average, serves pupils from the local area, but around half come from further afield.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes and children join from up to 16 different pre-school settings.
- The majority of pupils are White British, but around 40% of pupils are from other ethnic heritages, which is an above average proportion and an increase since the previous inspection. An above average proportion is at an early stage of learning to speak English, which is also higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The 20% proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding, called the pupil premium, is lower than is normally found.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus, and those with statements of special educational needs, are all around average.
- One pupil is taught in alternative provision (other schools or units).
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to improving basic skills, promoting healthy living and environmental awareness.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement to the highest levels through the school by:
  - ensuring that pupils always get down to work quickly and are really stretched in their thinking and speed of work
  - ensuring, when appropriate, those pupils who are capable of harder work start at a higher level than others in lessons to stretch their thinking further
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use their number and problem-solving skills in real-life investigative activities
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills more regularly in different subjects

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress so achieve well, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is not yet outstanding as not all pupils achieve to the highest levels they are capable of reaching. In national tests, pupils reach broadly average levels and results since the previous inspection have risen. The few gaps in learning between boys and girls are narrowing quickly.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which are lower than typical for their age. They make good progress in their early reading and writing skills, as well as increasing their social confidence. Children enjoyed their learning and acting out the story of the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, which helped develop their speaking, listening and social skills in a fun way.
- Pupils generally use their confident writing skills in a range of subjects, such as publishing the 'The Willen Times', in formulating a complaint or an action sequence to a story.
- In mathematics, pupils develop accurate number and problem solving skills, although on occasion activities do not stretch pupils' thinking enough, particularly those who are more able.
- Pupils achieve well in a wide variety of topic work, ranging from studies on the Tudors in Year 5 to those connected with the Second World War. Pupils are confident and articulate in speaking about their work.
- Reading standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Pupils were below average in their national screening phonics check and, as a result, the school focused more directly at well planned phonics teaching. This has enabled pupils to now develop a good knowledge of letters and sounds to aid their reading.
- Pupils have good ICT skills, aided by dedicated lessons in the computer suite, but these are not always extended or used enough during classroom-based learning activities.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding have improved their results, although at 26.6 average point score, they are slightly below average. They are closing the gap quickly with others nationally, however, as they respond well to the individual help, usually through provision of extra staff, resources and specific activities tailored well to their needs.
- All groups make similarly good progress, including pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs. Adults are particularly skilful at providing relevant and engaging activities for those pupils with significant behavioural or academic needs. This also helps ensure that all pupils are given an equal chance to learn and make good progress, including pupils from different ethnic heritages or who may be at the early stages of learning English.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now typically good. Teachers ensure that pupils are engaged, motivated, and enjoy their learning. It is not yet outstanding because opportunities are sometimes missed to really extend pupils' learning and achievement to enable all to reach their full potential.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is usually lively and fun as children have a variety of purposeful activities to follow, such as working out how to construct a rickety rickety bridge, developing their artistic skills or learning new words to write.
- Reading, particularly early letter sounds and combinations of letters, is taught well through the school and pupils become confident readers. Writing skills are taught effectively, and pupils also become confident writers.
- Teachers ask open-ended questions to help pupils think carefully, and 'hinge' questions which highlight key learning in the lesson are used well, particularly for those who find learning more difficult.

- Number and problem solving skills are taught well, although sometimes there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use real-life investigations as a means of providing further challenge.
- Most teachers make good use of audio visual resources to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers' explanations are clear and helpful, but sometimes overly long which delays pupils getting down to the main task of the lesson. Occasionally those pupils capable of harder work start at too low a level.
- In an excellent lesson in Year 5, pupils really enjoyed finding out information from different sources in books, asking lots of 'open' and 'closed' questions, and by using a good variety of ICT to support their learning. In other lessons, the planned use of ICT is not always as frequent.
- Pupils enjoy using their coloured cups on their table to indicate their levels of understanding. This helps teachers to spot those needing extra help. Teachers foster pupils' spiritual, social, moral, and cultural development well by highlighting simple rules and conventions or when learning cultures of other countries, such as Thailand.
- Teachers' marking is good and pupils use their simple 'ladders to success' to record their targets to work upon, showing they have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to get even better.
- Additional adults support learning effectively. They are well prepared, work closely with the class teacher and have a good understanding of how to move pupils' learning on during the lesson so that the pupils make good progress. The additional adults are particularly skilled in providing activities that motivate and challenge individuals with particular learning difficulties.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school has a positive ethos and pupils are typically courteous and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils' good behaviour and sense of safety have been maintained since the previous inspection. It is not yet outstanding as some pupils say there are occasional dips in behaviour around the school and in the playground. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and often say that their teachers are what 'makes the school fun'.
- They display positive attitudes to their learning, and are typically well motivated in lessons and fully engaged in the activities provided.
- Pupils are clear about safety routines, the dangers of computer use and cyber bullying. Staff are quick to deal with any behaviour or bullying issues in any form should they arise. Attendance levels are above average.
- Pupils' sense of safety is enhanced through planned activities such as visiting a local 'safety centre', where the pupils became aware of, and experienced, simulated dangers.
- The student council enjoys its role in influencing aspects such as colours of playground equipment, raising money for children, types of hot meals they would like, and the colour of the new carpet. The school's Eco-Warriors said they enjoyed keeping an eye on the school's energy efficiency.
- Parents who responded to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire Parent View support the view that pupils' behaviour is generally good on a day-to-day basis. Nearly all staff who returned an Ofsted questionnaire agreed pupils' behaviour was typically good.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Senior leaders, supported by staff and governors, have successfully improved the school's effectiveness since its previous inspection, notably in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because not all teaching is of the very best to ensure all pupils always reach the levels they are capable of.

- Subject and age group leaders know their subjects well and effectively oversee new arrangements now in place to improve further the quality of teaching; these consist of individual coaching and also peer mentoring, with staff helping each other to see where improvements can be made.
  - Checks on the quality of teaching are regular, cover a wide range of activities and have improved teaching to the now good levels. Occasionally observations focus more on teaching methods than identifying what will extend pupils' learning. Teachers' performance is linked accurately to salary progression and promotion.
  - The school has got to grips well with supporting those growing numbers of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, as well as those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, so they achieve well.
  - The local authority provides only light touch support to the school, reflecting its confidence in the school's leaders to bring about improvement.
  - The subjects taught help pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. These aspects thread through lessons, assemblies, visits and informal discussions, and have resulted in the good standards of behaviour and community ethos. However, there are not enough opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum.
  - Links with parents are good and nearly all those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said they would recommend the school to others. The school also works well in partnership with others locally.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors visit the school regularly to find out for themselves what is happening, and to be aware of the quality of teaching. They also benefit from courses to extend their understanding of school issues, ranging from finance and school inspection to how the school performs compared to others. In this respect they have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance relates to pupils' achievement, and its link to teachers' salaries, responsibilities and promotion. Governors also have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium provides extra staffing and resources to help those pupils achieve. Although checked upon termly, they are planning to assess its effectiveness again at the end of the school year. Governors ensure that, wherever possible, pupils and staff have equal opportunities to succeed within the school and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Their day-to-day responsibilities to ensure safety, secure staff vetting procedures and health and safety routines are carried out conscientiously and to a good standard.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110388
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	405281

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	358
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Neilson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michele Mellor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–11 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908690098
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