

Wilmington Primary School

Common Lane, Dartford, DA2 7DF

Inspection dates 2–3 June 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, working closely with the senior leadership team, leads the school well. Together, they have generated a clear vision for raising standards.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. From their different starting points, pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics throughout the school year on year.
- Teaching has improved considerably and is good. This consistently good picture is the key reason for pupils' good, and improving, progress.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school. This view is supported by almost all parents. Pupils thrive and develop into confident young people who are well prepared for the next steps in their education.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils say that the best thing about the school is the support they receive. Pupils show confident attitudes towards learning. Relationships throughout the school are positive.
- The headteacher is ably supported by an effective governing body. They are all fully committed to providing a high standard of education for all pupils. Leaders' actions have been effective in improving the quality of teaching throughout the school and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- As a result of good teaching, children in the early years have a good start to school life.
- The school curriculum is organised well to provide a wide range of subjects and activities. Older pupils say they enjoy mathematics best, together with physical education, art, design and technology.
- The school's new approaches to teaching reading have had a direct impact on raising standards and developing a love for reading among pupils of all ages.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers make good use of pupils' individual targets for improving their work in lessons to make sure that there is always a high enough level of challenge.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons, four of which were visited jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors looked at pupils' work in books and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, senior school leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. They took account of the 61 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and individual communications from parents. The responses to 27 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- A number of documents were also viewed, including the school's information about pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of its work. Inspectors scrutinised checks on teachers' effectiveness and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Gay Whent, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wilmington Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Reception children attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding which in this school is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school is part of a collaboration with five local primary schools.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all pupils clearly understand their improvement targets and are challenged by them, as they are in their reading
 - teachers consistently make more reference to pupils' targets, so pupils know exactly what they are expected to achieve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and an effective governing body, has acted quickly in starting to improve the school. As a leadership team they have shown a clear determination to drive the school forward. As a result they ensure that all pupils can make good or better progress and have successfully created a culture where good teaching and good behaviour flourish.
- In the words of one member of staff, 'The teaching staff and supporting staff all work as a team. This is why we are a happy school with happy children. A team I am proud to be a part of.' The vast majority of parents agree that their children are happy to come to school.
- Senior leaders work hard and successfully with staff to sustain and improve the quality of teaching across the whole school. This is achieved through regular and careful checking of each pupil's progress in every class, as well as the quality of teaching. All staff have targets linked to pupils' achievement. Leaders are confident in their checks because their judgements have been validated by external agencies including the local authority. Leaders' evaluation of their own effectiveness is accurate and improvement plans reflect the correct priorities for the future.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well led and managed, enabling all pupils to make good or better progress. Their needs are accurately identified through careful observation and their progress closely followed to ensure that they are learning as well as possible. The support given enables pupils to have complete access to the school's wider curriculum.
- In a similar way, the school checks to ensure that the additional government pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the needs of eligible pupils. As a result of the finely tuned support they receive, these pupils achieve as well as, if not better than, other pupils in the school.
- Subject leaders have a clear understanding of their areas of responsibility which they carry out well. They are able to make a good impact on outcomes for pupils through increasing teachers' effectiveness. They know what needs to be done to drive improvement forward for all pupils.
- All leaders at every level are determined to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential, that they have equal opportunities to prosper and that there is no discrimination. Leaders are careful to focus on the 'whole child'. As a result, the school's curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through their lessons and assemblies. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school actively celebrates respect for each other and encourages children to look out for others who may be lonely or unhappy and teaches them what to do to help. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council and readily share their views about the school.
- Primary school physical education and sport funding is used highly effectively. There has already been a noticeable increase in the rate of pupils participating in sport, and the school is using the funding so that more pupils participate in a much wider range of sports. Planned expenditure includes training for staff through the use of specialist coaches. The school has taken the lead in organising competitive sport in the local area. All pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 are now fully involved in a sport programme.
- Safeguarding arrangements are in place. All paperwork and policies are accurate, up to date and meet statutory requirements. Incidents are logged and recorded; they are followed up fully and appropriately.
- As the school is an academy, the local authority does not provide a high level of support for the school. However, links through a light touch system have proved to be effective. The headteacher is a member of a local collaboration of schools and school staff benefit from the ability to network and train with other leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is now a strength of the school. Governors have played a significant role in the development of the school since its previous inspection. Its members are well informed and provide a good level of challenge. Governors make good use of training opportunities to improve their skills, particularly in relation to making the best use of their visits to the school. As a result, they play an active role and visit the school often. As regular visitors to the school, and through the discussions they have with school leaders, governors are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, including the impact that is made by teaching assistants.
 - Governors clearly understand about the importance of outcomes for pupils. They know how the school performs compared with other schools nationally as well as similar schools locally. Governors make sure that they find out pupils' views and regularly meet pupils, with their books, to share their learning. They ensure that they speak to pupils of all abilities and ages.
 - Governors ensure that teachers' pay is linked to their performance and that this is directly linked to

outcomes for pupils. They know how leaders tackle underperformance and how good teaching is rewarded. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and ensure that the same level of challenge is applied to all other teachers in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This judgement is endorsed by all staff and the majority of parents who agree that behaviour is good. Pupils say that 'behaviour is always good' and that, in the past, 'any bad behaviour has always been quickly sorted out'.
- The school is a happy and welcoming community. Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors. They conduct themselves well around the school. At the heart of this good behaviour are the very positive relationships between pupils and adults. These are a real strength of the school. Pupils' good behaviour is seen in lessons, on the playground and in assembly when they enter the hall quietly and sensibly and settle very quickly.
- Pupils are eager to talk about their work and have positive attitudes towards learning. Although pupils do their best to remain keen and attentive, they can lose their concentration. On these occasions they have insufficient opportunities to work by themselves and, in so doing, manage their own behaviour more efficiently. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- The school does all it can to encourage good attendance, which is now in line with national figures. At the start of the school's recent building work, staff met pupils at the school gate every day as their parents dropped them off so that they could arrive safely. This ensured an efficient and effective start to the school day such that the routine has continued even though building work is complete. As a result, this not only improves punctuality but also ensures a calm start to the school day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The beautiful site is looked after well to ensure that pupils are as safe indoors as they are outside.
- Pupils, and their parents agree, feel safe in the school. The vast majority of parents agree that their child is well looked after at the school. The school logs parents' concerns and records the dates of meetings and their agreed outcomes carefully.
- Pupils can explain how to keep safe when they use the internet either at home or at school. They know what cyber bullying means and how to avoid it. This has been fully supported by training for children by the local police force.
- Older pupils say that there is no bullying in the school, although they believe there may have been some in the past. They know what bullying is; they are clear what to do and who they would go to if they needed help.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching has been strong. The quality of teaching is good across a range of subjects and in all key stages. This good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Pupils say that the best things about the school include the support they receive, especially when 'we do not understand what to do'. They say that their favourite lessons include 'maths, art, science, using computers, PE and design and technology'.
- A whole school focus on improving reading has captured pupils' interests. Pupils from Year 2 onwards are fully engaged in the new programme. This encourages pupils to read books which they can choose from a good range. They answer challenging questions about the book when they have finished reading it, using a computer programme, and gain points towards ultimately becoming a reading ambassador. They know exactly what they are expected to achieve. Pupils of all ages and abilities are happy to talk about their favourite books. They valued a great deal the recent visit from a professional author. They have developed a genuine love of reading.
- Pupils make the most rapid progress when work is carefully matched to their individual needs and expectations are high. In these lessons teaching proceeds at a very good pace. Teachers make effective links for applying mathematics across the curriculum in science and in geography. A pupil in Year 4 included numbers in a welcome pamphlet about a village in India, noting that '56.6% is covered in forest'.
- The clear improvements in the teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics ensure that most pupils are

making good progress. In all year groups, pupils are making outstanding progress in their reading. Older pupils are making faster progress in mathematics and reading than in writing. The school teaches mathematics particularly well. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons. Mathematical vocabulary is applied accurately and appropriately. Older pupils are able to explain that 'rounding 27.63 to the nearest whole number is 28 and 0.63 is greater than 0.5'. In one lesson observed, all pupils recorded their working out clearly, neatly and systematically.

- The school's leadership is focusing on improving pupils' writing through creative ways, so that more pupils make greater progress. Pupils in one lesson carried this out very successfully by 'hot seating' to explore their partner's views before writing a resolution and ending to a given situation. One pupil sensitively noted that sometimes a resolution 'does not lead to the ending you want'. Another pupil, in taking the role as a teacher, stated that they found the situation 'absolutely infuriating'. The questions that pupils posed included 'What do you want to achieve?' and 'Did you feel very offended when..?' Throughout the session, the teacher skilfully steered the questioning in a way which kept pupils' interest high. When they started to record their responses, all pupils did this earnestly and with high levels of concentration.
- Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants and deploy them effectively. Teaching assistants are well informed and often lead specific programmes which are having a very positive impact. As a result, they are making a difference to the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by helping them to improve their working memory.
- Nearly all parents agree that teaching is good. Pupils arrive calmly and happily in the morning. This sets the tone for the rest of the school day. Teachers have good classroom routines and have successfully established positive learning atmospheres. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. They are very well supported by parents in both these aspects. As a result, pupils concentrate well.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement is not outstanding because the proportions of pupils making good or better progress are not consistently high across all subjects and classes. In most classes, pupils' progress is good. In all classes, relationships are positive and pupils are eager to learn. When teaching is particularly effective, pupils learn at a rapid pace because lessons are not only lively and interesting but the work is also well matched to their differing learning needs. In these lessons the most able make very good progress because they are challenged well. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient and think for themselves. This is not the case in all lessons.
- At the end of Year 2, attainment has been significantly above average overall and in writing for the last five years. At the end of Year 6, following a dip in 2013, attainment is above average. The most recent assessments indicate that this is likely to remain the case in 2015, with particularly good gains in reading.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good overall. By the end of Year 2 it is above those of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The achievement of the most-able pupils at the end of Year 6 is above other pupils nationally, significantly so in their grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school has accurately identified that the progress the most-able pupils make could be higher if expectations in some lessons were higher. This is a school development focus across the curriculum.
- Pupils learn phonics (the sounds that letters make) very well. This is seen in the well above average results in the phonic screening check in Year 1. Linking sounds to letters is carefully practised and reinforced. Through clear explanation and encouragement, a teaching assistant working with a group of pupils who found this a particular challenge successfully enabled them to correct their initial spellings of words such as 'leef' to leaf'.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is a result of the accurate identification of their needs and the tailoring of support exactly to meet these needs. Teaching assistants who work with these pupils plan their work at just the right level of difficulty.
- Overall achievement shows that, throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress and attain at least as well and in some cases better than their peers. As there were very few pupils in Years 2 and 6 who were eligible to receive support through the additional government funding, there is no national comparison to report.

The early years provision is good

- Children have a good start to school life because they are looked after well in a caring and stimulating environment.
- Children make good, and sometimes better, progress from their starting points. When children start school they have the skills and abilities which are generally typical for their age. Strong leadership ensures that the numbers of pupils who achieve or exceed the expectations in each of the seven key areas of learning are higher than national levels. Consequently, by the end of their first year in school, the proportion achieving a good level of development is above national figures.
- The leadership and management of the early years provision are good. The focus on the creation of a calm and quiet atmosphere nurturing learning is prevalent. The attention given to the early development of reading, writing and mathematics skills ensures that children are well prepared for their next challenges in Year 1.
- Children play and learn happily together, whether in the classroom or outside. The school's ethos is friendly and encouraging. It promotes all aspects of personal, social and emotional development well. At the close of the morning before they wash their hands ready for lunch, children tidy pens, pencils and books together, even straightening a rug without any prompting. Children behave well, both inside and outside; the school strives to keep them as safe as possible. Electronically operated shutters means that they can enjoy outside activities even when the weather outside the classroom is wet and windy. Children learn as much inside as they do outside.
- Teaching is consistently good. The teacher and her teaching assistants work as an effective team, with high expectations. Learning activities are fun and interesting. Displays celebrate recent observations of blue tits feeding their young in a nest immediately outside the classroom. Binoculars on the window ledge have proved to be a well-used resource for the children. A teaching assistant imaginatively created snails with children out of dough using shells and art straws. In a review of their learning at the close of the morning, children were keen to share that 'a snail has a foot', 'snail's teeth are on their tongues', and 'they need to have teeth to eat lettuce'. They watched a video clip attentively and with great interest.
- Paintings of their favourite pets reflect the unique nature of early years education. Members of the early years team have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They are aware that there is potential for more language enrichment through displays inside and out for this to become an outstanding setting.
- Careful assessments are made of children's learning and development from a wide range of evidence, including focused teaching and free-play activities. Links with parents celebrate achievements at home as well as at school. In this way, parents are able to contribute to the records of their children's development. Assessments are checked and evaluated by external moderators to ensure that they are accurate.

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	137663
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	462417

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Douglas Hunter
Headteacher	Duncan Finlayson
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 June 2013
Telephone number	01322 274080
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