

Willowbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120056
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	358680
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Robertson
Headteacher	Sarah Ridley
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 teachers and saw 22 lessons. Inspectors observed two assemblies and held discussions with staff, parents and carers, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 52 parents and carers, 87 pupils and 13 members of staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

How consistent is the progress made by groups of pupils across different year groups?

- How effective is the action being taken to raise standards in writing?
- What is the impact of assessment procedures on the progress of the most able?

Information about the school

Willowbrook is larger than the average primary school. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage that caters for children aged 3-4 years in Willowbrook Nursery, run by the governing body. Children move from this into the school's Reception classes. The proportion of pupils in the school known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. Pupils represent a wide range of ethnic groups alongside those of White British heritage. The largest ethnic groups are from Indian backgrounds, with small proportions from Black African and White and Black Caribbean backgrounds. A small minority speaks English as an additional language, a few of whom are in the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the average. More pupils than usually found join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting or leaving points. The school has gained national recognition for its work in several areas, including Activemark and Healthy Schools status. The school has undergone a period of instability in senior leadership during the last four years.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Willowbrook Primary is an outstanding school. It is a school in which pupils feel very safe and highly valued because staff know them very well and provide excellent levels of care. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and derive great benefit from the welcoming and supportive learning environment. This is recognised by the vast majority of parents and carers. Nearly all of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire, or who met with the inspectors, expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and their children's experience. One, capturing the views of many, said 'I am very happy with the teachers at my son's school. He enjoys going to school and is making good progress. I like the communication between myself and the teachers.' Pupils take great pride in the wide range of jobs that they carry out, such as being members of the effective school council, helping others in their roles as buddies, and acting as eco-warriors. Their consistently outstanding behaviour acts as encouragement for others to contribute to the school's positive ethos. The eager attitudes to learning are underpinned by outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and take part in a wide range of physical activities.

An enterprising Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to school. Due to careful early assessments, which are particularly important for those who speak English as an additional language, children begin to make good progress immediately. This good progress continues as pupils move through the school and attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average and rising in reading, writing and mathematics. This is confirmed both by reliable school tracking information and the work inspectors observed across the school. However, because of weaknesses in writing, attainment in English is not rising as quickly as in mathematics. This had been the case at the higher levels, but teachers' assessments are now having an impact on planning leading to work that is matched well to the needs of more-able pupils. Contributing to the unevenness in attainment in writing is the inconsistent attention given across the curriculum to the development of writing skills such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation. In addition, pupils have a varying degree of awareness of how to evaluate their success in learning. The effective use of assessment information to identify where additional teaching will be most beneficial makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievement. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the very effective support provided for those who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances; this ensures that they keep up with classmates.

An outstanding feature of the school's provision is the vast range of partnerships that the school engages with to provide a particularly vibrant and stimulating curriculum. The excellent curriculum is based on a well-informed analysis of pupils' interests, the skills they need and how best they can be acquired. The half-termly cross-curricular topics have a special starter activity to stimulate project work that includes studies of the environment

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alongside aspects of UNICEF's respect agenda. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. Because much has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning, most teaching is good and some is outstanding. However, the quality is not consistent throughout the school. There is more still to do to ensure that pupils in all classes are provided with activities that challenge them consistently. In a few lessons, pupils spend too much time listening passively to lengthy introductions and teachers' questioning does not challenge and extend their thinking well enough. In these lessons, too few checks are made on pupils' progress so that learning can be developed more rapidly.

Another strong feature of the school is the extent to which use is made of the rich diversity of cultures within the local community. The school does much to engage with the local community and works very effectively with many agencies, faith groups and businesses. The school's links with the local community are excellent and underpinned by a detailed understanding of the context in which the school operates. As a result, pupils' awareness of and their preparation for living and working in a culturally diverse Britain are being developed exceptionally well. Since the last inspection, the headteacher, with the strong support of all staff, the governing body and others with leadership responsibilities, has steered the school very effectively. The strategies put in place to tackle the school's improvement priorities are proving successful and the school's overall effectiveness has improved since the last inspection. The school's view of itself is accurate and its record of raising achievement shows it is well placed to build on its strengths and has demonstrated good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - building basic handwriting, punctuation and spelling skills systematically in all subjects
 - raising pupils' awareness of how to gauge the success of their learning.
- Make all teaching good or better and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - lesson introductions are not too long and that pupils are actively engaged from the outset
 - learning tasks are appropriately challenging and matched to the attainment levels of pupils
 - teachers' questioning challenges and extends pupils' thinking and reasoning skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

When children join the Nursery, the skills levels of many are well below those usually found in children of their age in all areas of learning. Some have limited knowledge of English. Nevertheless, because the school is very attentive to individual needs, effective adult support ensures that learning is good for all groups of pupils. As a result, by the time pupils enter Year 1, nearly all are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals, although weaknesses in communication, language and literacy remain. Because close attention is paid to pupils' individual needs as they move through the school, inspection evidence shows that pupils who speak English as an additional language, those with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from different ethnic backgrounds, all progress equally well and standards are rising. This is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy, where pupils are responding particularly well to challenging teaching. Pupils enjoy discussing ideas in small groups and with their class, which is promoting their self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. Good achievement was exemplified in Year 6 lessons when pupils enjoyed identifying adjectives to describe food and used alliteration, similes and personification correctly. Talking with partners and working in groups, pupils were able to use these devices to write rich sentences by the close of the session. The few pupils who join the school other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to settle quickly and make good progress.

Pupils are considerate of each other and their excellent behaviour helps to make the school the calm, harmonious and welcoming place it is. The overwhelming majority report that they feel very safe at school and are confident that they can turn to an adult to sort out any concerns. They report that, while bullying has taken place occasionally, they trust the adults in the school fully and know that someone will help them if needs arise. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to avoid risks, whether using the internet or during their journeys to and from school. Pupils are very proud of their school and make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community in many ways, for example, though raising large sums of money for charitable causes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. In the very best lessons, pupils make good progress because assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks and because pupils are expected to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Perceptive questioning is used by adults to extend pupils' thinking and encourage their use of more varied vocabulary in their answers. This was seen in an outstanding Year 3 lesson, for example, where pupils were encouraged by the teacher's questions to talk about what they had discovered about the River Nile. However, in lessons that fall below this standard, the work planned is not always pitched at the correct level and sometimes progress slows because the tasks do not offer enough challenge. There is much good practice in the marking of pupils' work. Instances of grammatical and spelling errors in written work are corrected systematically in English books, though not always in other subjects. Particularly good use is made of assessment information to identify underperformance and to track pupils' progress towards their targets.

The curriculum provides pupils with an excellent range of learning experiences. Pupils' needs and interests have been taken into account and, as a result, provision for creative subjects, such as art, music and dance, is excellent. The curriculum is enhanced particularly well through local partnerships; for example, links with other schools and good use of residential and other visits broaden pupils' life experiences. These and many other enrichment activities offered after school are particularly important because many pupils do not have extensive opportunities outside school life.

The vast majority of parents and carers say that the school is very caring. This is borne out by inspection findings and was observed at the breakfast club, which encourages good attendance and establishes good preparedness for pupils' subsequent learning. Staff work hard to involve parents and carers in their children's learning. Strenuous efforts are made to sustain pupils' regular attendance, with additional support provided for those returning after periods of absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels have worked very successfully since the previous inspection. Provision has improved considerably and, since outcomes for pupils are outstanding, the school gives excellent value for money. There is a clear sense of direction. Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and very careful tracking

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of pupils' progress, the school has recognised its strengths and ensured that weaknesses are properly identified and tackled. In particular, the headteacher and her deputy have a detailed knowledge of the school and community. They share a determination to raise standards further. The thorough way that staff check carefully the progress of different groups of pupils reflects the school's very strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The school puts its commitment to equal opportunities at the centre of its ethos and the success of its plans to remedy previous gender differences in progress shows that its policies are having a very strong impact.

The governing body has worked well with other leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality. The site is very secure, protected by locked gates, an enclosing fence and vehicular access is through electronically controlled gates. Stringent checks are made at the single point of access to the building. The governing body is also well informed about the school. The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and provides effective support and challenge. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is excellent. A plan and clear actions are in place that promote pupils' understanding from a local perspective extremely well. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively. The school has taken the need to expand its links to provide national and global perspectives very seriously. The school is giving support to a school in Leicester and has raised funds to help the education of children in African schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly as a result of the well-organised induction arrangements and good adult care and support. All adults are vigilant in meeting the needs of children and welfare requirements are met. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their learning. Most

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children get a good start in the pre-school setting where opportunities for active play in the excellent outdoor play area are taken up eagerly. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that soon children begin to share, to learn and to play together. Children show obvious enjoyment, for example, as they start counting and recognising numbers. Children enter the Reception Year with levels of skills that are below those expected for their age. Parents and carers are delighted, typically commenting about the progress they see their children making. A particular strength in provision lies in the accurate assessment of children's language needs, so that appropriate support can be provided. Increasing competence in spoken English enables them to express themselves with growing confidence as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes. Outcomes, in terms of early reading, writing and calculation skills, and particularly in personal, social and emotional development, are at least broadly average or above by the end of the Reception Year. The range of learning opportunities provides positive experiences for children, both indoors and outdoors, and covers the six areas of learning well. However, opportunities that arise to extend children's early key skills outdoors are not always taken. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, which includes both Willowbrook Nursery and the school's Reception classes, are good because adults work well as a team and share a vision about what can be done to enhance children's learning experiences.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire was lower than in other primary schools. The responses to the questionnaire reflect a positive relationship with the overwhelming majority of parents and carers, who say that staff keep their children safe, that their children enjoy school and that teaching and leadership, especially by the headteacher, is good. Inspection evidence corroborates these positive comments. Very few individual concerns were expressed and were followed up in confidence by the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Willowbrook Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 369 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	67	16	31	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	69	15	29	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	63	17	33	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	65	14	27	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	73	14	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	56	20	38	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	60	18	35	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	56	19	37	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	60	20	38	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	52	20	38	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	50	21	40	3	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	50	23	44	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	67	17	33	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willowbrook Primary School, Leicester, LE5 2NA

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the very friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you and you were very helpful in sharing your views and telling us how the school council were helping to improve the school even more. We enjoyed particularly watching you learn in lessons and seeing your enjoyment in assembly.

Yours is an outstanding school. Your behaviour is excellent. Most of you enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. You make more progress on some occasions than on others. We have asked your teachers to make sure that, in all of your lessons, you are stretched so that you make the best possible progress all the time. We have also asked that teachers make more frequent checks on your learning in lessons. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and, through this, give you good guidance on what you have to do to take the next steps in learning, particularly in developing your writing skills. We have asked staff to do more to improve your writing and you all can help yourselves to do better by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

You understand the importance of being healthy, you eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. You learn to work and play very well together and willingly help each other. We were also impressed with how you all do so much to help the school, especially those who help at playtimes and in the classrooms and those of you involved in making decisions through the school council. Yours is a strong and happy community of learners.

Adults at school look after you exceptionally well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. We think that everyone at Willowbrook can work together to do these things and that all of you will want to play your part by working hard and attending well.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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