

Willow Tree Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121424
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380236
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2012
Lead inspector	Carmen Markham

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	509
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Fogarty
Headteacher	Helen Davey
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

Inspection team

Carmen Markham
James McGrath
Chris Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 teachers teaching 26 lessons, which amounted to approximately 13 hours of observation in classes. Three joint lesson observations were undertaken with senior staff. In addition, the inspection team observed several support lessons where experienced practitioners worked with pupils requiring specialist support. Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Discussions were held with a small number of parents and carers. Inspectors heard several pupils from each key stage read and talked to them about their reading. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school development plan, safeguarding and equality policies and recent minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspectors analysed 147 parent and carer questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a new school that opened in April 2011 following the amalgamation of the nursery, infant and junior schools that shared the same site. The school is now twice the size of the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language are low but increasing. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government for attainment and progress.

A serious safeguarding incident that occurred in school this term has been investigated by the appropriate authorities and is now closed. Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind. The welfare provision in the school was investigated against the regulations that are in place and inspection judgements are based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is not good because teaching is not yet good enough to move the current satisfactory progress to good by the end of Year 6. Also the school's new leadership and management are still in the process of establishing a staffing structure to secure robust monitoring and evaluation of school procedures and outcomes for pupils, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Given pupils' starting points their achievement is satisfactory. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 where writing is a strength. Achievement for Key Stage 2 pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average, although achievement in writing and mathematics is somewhat weaker than in reading, and overall girls perform better than boys.
- Teaching is no better than satisfactory overall because its quality is inconsistent in Key Stage 2 and the support provided by teaching assistants varies. Teachers are increasingly held to account for the performance of pupils. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school. They have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy lessons because relationships are good and the curriculum reflects their interests. The school environment is safe and orderly and pupils socialise well. Attendance has improved and is above average.
- Leaders have worked successfully to ensure that there is a strong whole-school vision and sense of purpose. The priorities for improvement have been accurately identified and are being tackled effectively. However, because the management teams are very new the management of pupils' performance and the leadership of teaching are still developing, making the overall quality of leadership and management satisfactory rather than good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils in writing and mathematics by improving the overall quality of teaching so that all is good or better, most particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - monitoring rigorously the quality of marking throughout the school to ensure that it always provides pupils with the information they need to improve their work
 - using the effective Key Stage 1 learning strategies to accelerate progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2
 - engaging all pupils in their learning through challenging activities that are tailored to meet their needs
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are used effectively in all lessons to provide consistently effective support, especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
 - further developing teachers' questioning skills to ensure questions extend pupils' understanding and thinking skills.

- Further develop the skills of the leadership and management team to enable them to rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in relation to its impact on pupils' achievement and progress by:
 - making sure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is more rigorous and focuses more sharply on pupils' learning and progress
 - providing managers with further training to undertake their roles more successfully
 - more regularly monitoring pupils' books for the quality of marking and the progress pupils are making
 - using school tracking data more effectively to check on the performance of pupils in lessons.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below age-related expectations. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, progress and achievement are good. In Key Stage 1, the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is very effective with the result that attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is generally above average. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is more variable. This results in achievement that is only satisfactory given pupils' starting points. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average overall. In reading it is above average, but in writing and mathematics attainment is broadly average. Leaders and managers have accurately identified some weakness in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 that they are starting to tackle effectively, with clear signs of recent improvement. Overall, however, achievement over time is no better than satisfactory because pupils have not continued to make the same good progress in Key Stage 2 as they have lower down the school. Girls generally achieve better than boys. However, leaders and managers are tackling this effectively and inspection evidence shows that the gap is narrowing securely. School data and inspection evidence show that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs

make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress tends to vary, especially in Key Stage 2, reflecting the quality of the teaching and support they receive.

Almost all pupils enjoy learning and engage well in lessons. They value school visits and visitors that make learning more exciting. They behave well, are motivated, want to succeed. They work effectively both independently and collaboratively. Pupils have a developing understanding of how to improve their work through the use of 'top tips', check lists and teachers' marking. Parents and carers are positive about the progress their children make in school but feel that their children could be 'stretched more'. Inspection evidence is that progress is good and that pupils are challenged appropriately in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, but that the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils, although improving is no better than satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is consistently effective with the result that pupils' achievement is good. Teaching matches tasks closely to pupils' needs and abilities. Teamwork is strong and teaching is well planned to provide a good variety of interesting activities. Teaching makes effective use of resources both indoors and outside. Children move seamlessly from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 because transition is well planned and good continuity in teaching strategies is provided. In Key Stage 2, teaching is more variable in quality; while much is good, too much is satisfactory and this slows progress overall. In all lessons relationships are good and the majority of teaching assistants support learning effectively. Where teaching is good or better, assessment is used well to plan for the needs of all pupils, a variety of questioning skills involve and challenge all pupils, there are high expectations and the pace of lessons is brisk. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning and their progress is good. An example of this was seen in a lesson on the witches in Macbeth, where all pupils recited the lines and added their own expression and 'cackles'. In another example, a Nursery child working with soapy bubbles demonstrated the successful sharing of a story about wizards and good communication skills when she explained that she was, 'making a potion for a spell'. There have been recent improvements in the quality of reading following the introduction of strategies to keep pupils better informed about their progress.

Where teaching is satisfactory, progress is slower because pupils are not fully involved in their learning and their needs are not always fully met. Expectations are sometimes too low, often characterised by the level of questioning, and there is either too little challenge or the level of challenge is too high for some pupils to succeed. The quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school, particularly in mathematics, where pupils are given insufficient information to help them to improve their work. Almost all parents and carers believe that their child is taught well. Inspectors agree that in many classes teaching is good but that in a significant proportion teaching is satisfactory, especially in Key Stage 2.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and provided with appropriate support from school staff and specialist agencies. Consequently, they make at least satisfactory progress through school. However, in some classes teaching assistants are unsure about their role. Teachers make a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of their pupils by having high expectations of behaviour, providing many opportunities for social and independent working and using the curriculum well to promote reflection on ethical issues, personal safety and cultural awareness.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, support each other well in lessons and benefit from many curriculum opportunities to extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, India day involves members of the local Hindu community in sharing examples of their culture with pupils. Pupils are considerate and courteous towards others. They make a good contribution to their learning by behaving well in lessons and playing well together using the rich outdoor play environment that they value and respect. Parents, carers and pupils confirm that incidents of bullying are rare. All express confidence in the school's systems to manage bullying quickly and effectively. Pupils are clear about the action they should take if they witness or become a victim of bullying. Above average attendance and good punctuality contribute well to pupils' safety and reflect pupils' positive views of school. Pupils are very well informed about how the school keeps them safe and how they can promote safety. Almost all parents, carers and pupils are confident that children are safe in school. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned about lessons being disrupted by poor behaviour. However, inspectors witnessed no disruption in the lessons they observed and pupils said that behaviour in lessons was typically good and that if isolated incidents of poor behaviour occurred, they were dealt with rapidly and effectively.

Leadership and management

The governing body, leaders and managers have been successful in uniting two different schools in a relatively short period of time. A community has emerged with a strong sense of purpose and direction. Parents and carers have been closely involved in the school's development and recognise improvements in school, particularly in having the opportunity to improve their ability to help their children to achieve more. The new governing body has been exceptionally supportive in this period of change and has used its skills astutely to ensure effective on-going strategic planning. Members of the governing body are building strong links with staff and pupils' classes to ensure that they remain well informed and can work effectively with the developing senior leadership team to drive the school forward.

The leadership and management team is almost complete and is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through the improved tracking of pupils' progress and achievement reviews, where teachers are being increasingly held to account for the performance of their pupils. The current inconsistency in the quality of teaching is a legacy of the amalgamation. However, the processes for monitoring and evaluating teaching are still developing and do not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning and progress. The successful emergence of this new community school, thorough strategic planning, improved attendance and sustained pupils' achievement over the period of change are testament to the school's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good use is made of the locality as a learning resource for many cultural aspects, including music and drama. The successful India Day during the inspection was also an example of these strong links. Assemblies and the curriculum engage pupils well in understanding equality and the tackling of discrimination. However, differences between groups of learners, although closing securely, mean that the school's promotion of equality is only satisfactory. Secure arrangements are made for effective safeguarding. The site is well maintained. Pupils feel safe and well looked after in school. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 May 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Willow Tree Community Primary School, Harrogate, HG2 7SG

I would like to thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to inspect your school. A special 'thank you' goes to the pupils who gave up some of their time to talk to the inspectors about their activities.

You attend a satisfactory school. School leaders and the governors are improving your school so that you can all make better progress. We are very impressed by the good improvement in your attendance and the good progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics and your achievement is satisfactory. Throughout the school, your achievement in reading is good. In Key Stage 2, however, some weaknesses remain in your writing and mathematics. Although we saw some good teaching, overall teaching is satisfactory. Your behaviour is good and so you are able to learn in lessons without interruptions. You all feel very safe in school and you understand how to stay safe. It was good to see how considerate you all are of other people and how helpful and kind you are to each other.

To help you all make even more progress we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to:

- help teachers to make sure that all the lessons they teach are good or outstanding
- help the school leaders to improve their skills when they check the work that teachers do and on your progress in lessons.

Please continue to work hard and enjoy your school.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Markham
Lead inspector

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