

Willow Wood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135256
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	381853
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Coldrick
Headteacher	Sue Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates
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Susan Walsh

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 23 lessons, observing 13 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and groups of pupils. The inspectors also heard 10 pupils read. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at governing body minutes, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires returned by 33 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Willow Wood Primary School is an above average-sized primary school and the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is much higher than average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This includes those pupils based in the school's resourced provision for pupils with complex learning needs. There are no disabled pupils. The school does not meet the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has achieved some awards including healthy school awards. The headteacher is new to the school this academic year. A children's centre on-site is not managed by the school and is subject to a separate Ofsted 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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils across Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, and in the support provided for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.
- The school is not satisfactory because pupils, including those with special educational needs in mainstream classes, do not make sufficient progress overall in Years 1 to 6. As a result, attainment in English and mathematics is significantly below average at the end of Year 6. While children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage from very low starting points, the school does not build sufficiently or consistently well upon this in Years 1 to 6. However, some clear improvements have been made since the arrival of the new headteacher. For example, attainment in reading is beginning to rise.
- Teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall; slightly more than half was deemed good or better. Nevertheless, over time there has not been enough good teaching to help close performance gaps. The pace of learning in lessons is often too slow and the expectations of some teachers are not high enough, with opportunities missed to use marking effectively. However, recent effective leadership of teaching is resulting in improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The introduction of new management strategies, more effective teaching and a better understanding by pupils of acceptable behaviour, have led to satisfactory behaviour and better attitudes to learning throughout the school. Pupils are kept safe and well cared for. The attendance of the great majority of pupils has improved and is broadly average.

- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is leading and managing the school, including the management of performance, with determination and success to improve the education offered to pupils. Senior leaders have been given much more responsibility for monitoring performance. However, there are weaknesses in provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the lack of early identification of additional needs and in the training of staff to support pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 by accelerating progress for all groups of pupils to raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring gaps in pupils' knowledge and application of numeracy skills are addressed
 - ensuring gaps in pupils' writing skills regarding the correct use of punctuation, sentence structure and accurate spelling are addressed
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills well in subjects across the curriculum.
- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - increasing the pace of learning in some lessons so that pupils make at least good progress
 - ensuring expectations are high and work is well matched to pupils' needs
 - ensuring effective use is made of marking and that pupils take full notice of the points made.
- Improve the provision made for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes so they make at least satisfactory progress by:
 - ensuring that pupils' additional needs are identified and addressed as soon as possible
 - ensuring that all members of staff who work with these pupils are given appropriate training.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is inadequate. Pupils do not make enough progress in Years 1 to 6 and their attainment in English and mathematics is below average. Children start school with skills that are well below those typical for their age. While they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage they still enter year 1 with skills below those expected for their age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have developed good foundations for learning in the basic skills of language, communication and mathematics. However, the school does not build on these strong foundations as pupils' progress slows across Years 1 to 6 and is inadequate. This is reflected in pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 which has been significantly below average for the last four years. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining levels expected for their age in English and mathematics in 2011, for

example, was significantly below the national average. Standards of attainment in reading are below average at the end of both key stages. The school's assessment information shows that over time pupils, including those with special educational needs in mainstream lessons, are making inadequate progress. Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and their work in books confirm that there are recent signs of improving progress, especially in Year 2 and Year 6. However, these improvements are not yet of sufficient consistency or duration to address fully the legacy of underachievement in all classes.

In the lessons observed pupils generally made satisfactory progress. Occasionally, but still not often enough, they make the good progress needed to help close the gap between their current performance and that expected nationally. In one lesson, for example, pupils learned well when a good link was made with the forthcoming Olympic Games. In a debate about whether an athlete who had taken unauthorised drugs should be allowed to participate, pupils of all attainment levels used their speaking and listening skills well. However, while learning and performance in lessons is improving, it is still inconsistent across classes.

The school's approach to developing reading, with better resources now available and more allocated time, has ensured that attainment is improving. For example, although still below average, attainment in reading in Year 2 has improved this year.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there are gaps in pupils' understanding and application of basic number skills but this issue is starting to be addressed across the school. The same picture can be seen in relation to pupils' writing skills with weaknesses evident in punctuation, sentence structure and basic spelling skills. It is very evident that good or better teaching in Year 6 has focused on ensuring that the gaps in previous learning are narrowed. The school has evidence to show that this focus is achieving success, with a broadly average proportion of Year 6 pupils currently on track to make the expected rate of progress. However, the school's own data show that while the gap is beginning to narrow, attainment remains below average.

Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes make inadequate progress over time. The small steps that pupils need to take in order to make progress are not always identified early enough to plan to meet their learning needs. Better support for pupils in the resourced provision results in these pupils making satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching

Strategies to lead and manage improvements in the quality of teaching have been successful in ensuring that teaching is now securely satisfactory with a considerable proportion across the school which demonstrates good or better practice. There are two key reasons for these improvements:

- the successful focus on developing teachers' skills and knowledge in using assessment data
- the consistent application of behaviour management strategies.

However, the full impact of these actions on accelerating pupils' progress has yet to be seen. As a result, while there are examples of sustained progress in Years 2 and 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, this is not consistent across the school. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the resourced provision is satisfactory; however, for such pupils in mainstream classes it is inadequate. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire feel that teaching is good but inspection findings show that it is only satisfactory.

Teachers increasingly use the information about pupils' attainment and progress sharply when planning lessons. In a small number of lessons where teaching is good or better there is a fast pace and very good use is made of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Where teaching is less strong teachers do not pick up soon enough on pupils' misconceptions and the pace of lessons is too slow.

Lessons are calm due to a consistent approach to behaviour management and strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work together and effective routines have been established. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their experiences and pupils feel increasingly confident to discuss a wide range of sensitive issues freely. For example, the strong focus now given to addressing pupils' social and emotional development in designated lessons is proving successful in allowing pupils to express their own ideas. This provision, along with topics in other curriculum areas, provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Topic-based work develops their experience of other cultures, for example, the issues surrounding the impact of drought in some African countries. However, pupils are given limited opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects, and the over-use made in some classes of commercial worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to write or investigate more challenging and varied mathematics problems.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is becoming more accurate, and in most classes, provides clear guidance through marking on the next steps in pupils' learning. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils take action on the comments made. The school provides targets for pupils to aspire to but some of the targets are not specific enough in identifying precisely what it is that pupils need to improve.

In the Reception classes children choose activities and are encouraged to learn independently and challenge themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants in Reception support children's learning through effective, challenging questioning with good teaching leading to improved progress and attainment.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There has been a strong focus on improving pupils' behaviour. Improved behaviour management procedures ensure that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils are generally polite and helpful. They behave well in lessons but behaviour is satisfactory overall because around school, including in the playground, such good behaviour is not always the norm. Pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour receive effective support from teaching assistants to help them to concentrate on their work. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding that bullying can take many forms and are clear that the school will deal with any type of bullying well. They say

that they are free from bullying and harassment. In the playground pupils say they feel safe. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire confirm that their children mostly feel safe and secure in school. Pupils overwhelmingly agree and inspection evidence supports these views.

Pupils are mostly enthusiastic about learning and are eager to contribute. For example, children in the Early Year Foundation Stage were very animated when talking about an educational visit they had made. They were keen to come up with a description of an animal that they had been told was lost in order to produce a poster to help people find it. They enjoyed opportunities to work independently and to participate fully in paired or group work.

Strong care and attention given to individuals, especially to potentially vulnerable pupils, both in the school and the resourced provision contribute well to their personal development. Pupils take on a number of different responsibilities across the school, for instance as school councillors or road safety officers and carry these out well. Pupils' attendance has improved. Due to the school's more rigorous procedures, attendance is now average.

Leadership and management

Strong, determined leadership and management by the relatively new but highly experienced headteacher and reorganised senior leadership team, have established a firm drive for improvement. Initiatives identified in the school development plan have not been in place long enough to accelerate pupils' progress across the school and improve their attainment significantly, but there are clear signs of improvement in all parts of the school. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are very positive about the school. For example, one parent commented, 'This is a happy school with plenty of activities for everyone.'

The leadership team are clear and enthusiastic about their roles and are having an increasing impact on pupils' learning and progress. However, there are instances where pupils' special educational needs are not identified early enough, resulting in them making inadequate progress. At times pupils with additional learning needs in mainstream classes are sent to work in the resource provision. This does not meet their needs because this specialised resource is allocated to provide for pupils who are admitted with more complex learning needs.

Highly focused targeting of the right priorities is enabling the school to move forward more quickly. The leadership and management of teaching are satisfactory with a good emphasis on monitoring and improving teaching, including through professional development. In a relatively short period of time, this approach has eradicated the weakest teaching. Shared expertise, including the support of external consultants, has also ensured more good practice, for example, in the teaching of mathematics and in ensuring that the deployment of staff to teach early reading skills is effective. However, teachers' and teaching assistants' understanding of the specific learning needs of pupils with special educational needs is inconsistent. The school recognises the need for further professional development in order to ensure early and accurate identification of how best to support these pupils' learning.

Alongside school leaders, the governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. It is now better informed, through the governors' forum and individual governor links to classes, about the impact of provision on pupils' achievements. It is, therefore, better placed to hold staff to account for raising standards. The curriculum is satisfactory in promoting pupils' engagement and interest in learning, with a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their skills in subjects across the curriculum. Assemblies and cross-curricular topics, promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development soundly.

Discussions held with pupils and an analysis of responses to the questionnaires from pupils and staff demonstrate that recent changes are having a very positive impact on the quality of the learning environment. For example, one pupil commented, 'The headteacher has made the school a happy place.' The school has an inclusive ethos, and leaders, managers and staff tackle discrimination effectively. Pupils in the resourced provision are integrated well into mainstream classes where appropriate. The school seeks to promote equality of opportunity as seen in the good support for pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. However, not all pupils benefit from teaching which is good enough and some make inadequate progress. Consequently, the impact of the promotion of equality is inadequate overall. Nevertheless, improvements already made to a number of aspects of the school's work demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willow Wood Community Primary School, Winsford, CW7 3HN

Thank you for being so friendly when we inspected your school. It was helpful to listen to your views about school and to find out what you enjoy doing. While your behaviour is satisfactory overall, we saw how many of you behave well and pay attention in lessons. We were pleased to see how many of you work together and show consideration for each other. It was wonderful to see how enthusiastic children are about their learning in the Reception classes.

We found that teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher and the senior staff and other adults are focusing on improving teaching more and some lessons are good or even better. This is helping you to make better progress. However, up until recently most of you have not achieved as well as you should. For this reason, the inspection team has decided that you are not yet receiving a good enough standard of education and have judged that your school requires a notice to improve. This means that the school will get some help to improve and inspectors will make a further visit to check that things are getting better.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements.

- Increase the amount of good quality teaching so that you all make good progress.
- Help you to make better progress in English and mathematics.
- Make sure that those pupils who find learning difficult make better progress and that the staff have an even better understanding of how they can help them.

All of you can help by working even harder. Another way you can help is by reading the comments teachers make when they mark your work and doing your best to follow your teachers' advice. If you do, your work will improve.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector

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