

Willow Primary School

Alston Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 7EZ

Inspection dates 23-24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Standards in English and mathematics fell sharply in 2012.
- Pupils make inadequate progress. The gap between the achievement of some groups of pupils and similar groups nationally has widened because the quality of teaching over time is inadequate.
- Senior leaders have not addressed the decline in standards and the weaknesses in teaching with enough urgency.
- The school's view of its own effectiveness is inaccurate. Systems to check teaching are underdeveloped and information about pupils' progress is unreliable and is not analysed effectively.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, including how they should present their work, are too low.
- The curriculum is inadequate. Activities in lessons are not planned with a clear focus on the new skills pupils are expected to gain from them.
- Teachers do not have accurate information about how well pupils are doing and as a result the work set for pupils in lessons is not well matched to their differing needs.
- Pupils' work is not marked thoroughly and pupils are not told how to improve their work.
- A small but significant minority of pupils do not behave well enough at break times.
- Systems for communication with parents are not effective.
- Governors do not know enough about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and so are unable to have enough influence on improving the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons. Most pupils enjoy learning and try their best. They say they feel safe and they form good relationships with other pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Most staff say that they enjoy working at the school and want it to do well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 14 members of staff including three joint observations with the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspectors made short visits to parts of lessons. Inspectors looked at a wide range of work completed by pupils and listened to a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a member of the governing body and school staff.
- Inspectors analysed a wide range of documents, including those relating to pupils' progress, records of the quality of teaching, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and the school's self-evaluation. They also analysed the school's development planning, plus records relating to behaviour and attendance, the curriculum and safeguarding. The school's website was also looked at.
- The inspection team also took account of the 85 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and numerous email contacts and phone calls from parents. Inspectors received 20 responses from staff to their questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michael Wintle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julie Harrison	Additional Inspector
Susan Twaits	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well below that of most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Willow Primary converted to become an academy on 1 April 2012. When its predecessor school, Willow Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding. There have been a number of changes to staff since that inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so it is good or better in order that pupils make at least good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable of particularly in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers take account of what pupils already know when planning lessons in order to match work closely to the full range of pupils' learning needs
 - taking steps to help all groups of pupils make the progress of which they are capable and achieve equally well, particularly pupils with special educational needs
 - making sure that teachers always have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, including standards of presentation, spelling and handwriting
 - modifying the curriculum so that it enables all pupils to achieve well
 - making sure that pupils' books are always marked thoroughly and that marking provides pupils with clear feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- Urgently improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
 - taking swift action to eradicate inadequate teaching
 - developing an effective system of self-evaluation so that it is realistic, robust, and accurate in focusing on what the school is good at and what areas need developing
 - establishing rigorous systems for checking pupils' progress

- ensuring leaders and managers know how to review and analyse information about pupils' progress and use it to check whether their actions are helping to improve pupils' achievement
 - making certain that when leaders observe lessons they focus on the progress pupils are making as well as what the teacher is doing
 - improving the effectiveness of the methods used to communicate with parents
 - undertaking an external review of the governing body in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management could be improved.
- Improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils who behave boisterously at break times by teaching them how to play purposefully and understand the consequences of their actions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Achievement is inadequate. Although pupils' attainment remains above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, the progress pupils make is too slow when compared to the progress made by pupils nationally.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress in English is too slow. The proportion of pupils making expected and greater than expected progress from their individual starting points by the end of Year 6 was particularly low in 2012. Pupils make too many mistakes that are not challenged enough by teachers.
- In mathematics, rates of progress are also slow, but to a lesser degree than in English. Pupils' calculation skills are not secure and some teachers are not identifying this quickly enough.
- During the inspection, in the majority of lessons seen at both key stages, pupils' progress was not good enough, especially in English. The most recent work in pupils' books showed inadequate progress or low-level achievement in many classes across the school. Pupils themselves say that they often find the work is too easy.
- Over time, pupils have made insufficient gains in their learning. This continues in some classes and year groups because assessment information is not always accurate nor is it used effectively by teachers to plan work for pupils of different abilities. The result of this is pupils do not achieve as well or as rapidly as they should.
- The achievement over time of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is inadequate. These pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points so that, by the time they leave Year 6, they have not achieved as well as similar pupils in other schools. This is compounded by the unreliability of the school's records of pupils' progress and has led to some pupils' levels of attainment being incorrectly assessed.
- The progress of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is inadequate. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012, the attainment of those who were known to be entitled to free school meals was almost a year behind other pupils in reading and mathematics. In some year groups, such as Years 3 and 5, many of these pupils have made little or no progress and the school is not closing the gap with other pupils in the school quickly enough.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. Children settle quickly and enjoy the activities that are generally interesting. Their development is assessed regularly and they enter Key Stage 1 with expected levels of learning.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) requires improvement as not enough pupils are making better than expected progress in Key Stage 1. Teachers do not build on reading skills of the younger pupils sufficiently to secure quicker progress as they move through the school. Many pupils have reading books that are too easy for them.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate. Too many teachers do not use the information they have about pupils' abilities to match work to the needs of their individual pupils. This slows progress in reading, writing and mathematics lessons.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Too many activities keep pupils occupied rather than moving their learning on. Work is often not challenging enough. In one English lesson all of the pupils in the class, irrespective of their ability, completed the same work. In many cases the work was too easy and a number of pupils finished quickly. Very little new learning took place.
- Pupils present their work untidily in all subjects. When inspectors looked at pupils' books they found considerable differences in the quality of pupils' writing and how they present their work.

Layout, spelling and handwriting were often weak.

- Too few teachers make positive comments when they mark pupils' books and offer good advice to pupils on how to improve their work, so pupils remain unsure of what to do next.
- In one mathematics lesson on calculation, the work was too easy for most pupils. Pupils used a calculator to subtract numbers. Most pupils easily finished each question. The lesson lacked challenge for the more-able and these pupils made slow progress.
- Teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. The activities that children take part in, inside the classroom, capture their interest well and encourage good learning. What is provided outside does not match the quality of what is provided inside.
- There is some good teaching notably in Year 2 and Year 6 where pupils' achievement is better because work is matched appropriately to pupils' needs. In the best lessons ask questions that challenge pupils' thinking and give them opportunities to share their ideas. In one good lesson observed, pupils chose the level of difficulty they wished to work at. Pupils were keen to take on a challenge. As a result, progress was quick and pupils learned new things.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The school provides a caring environment. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and this is evident in their enthusiastic participation in the life of the school such as sporting activities and singing. However, pupils' behaviour and safety require improvement because a small number of pupils do not always behave well enough at break times.
- Classrooms are calm and pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Even though many lessons are dull and uninspiring, most pupils behave well in lessons. However, despite pupils' good understanding of their rights and responsibilities as learners, the behaviour of a small number dips at break times and becomes over-boisterous. This is because they do not always have the self-discipline or the opportunities to play more purposefully.
- Pupils form good relationships with staff and this encourages them to seek help if they need it. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe and they are confident that the school cares for them well.
- Staff hold positive views about pupils' behaviour. However, a number of parents were concerned about behaviour at lunchtimes because they and their children think more could be done to make break times more enjoyable.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what constitutes bullying. They say that bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of staying safe, including, for example, how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Attendance is average. The school has worked hard to promote better attendance. Most pupils arrive on time because they like being at school.

The leadership and management is inadequate

- Leadership, management and governance are inadequate because not enough has been done to halt the decline in standards and address parents' concerns. Weaknesses in teaching have been allowed to persist for too long and action taken so far has not sufficiently raised teaching standards.
- Senior leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They have failed to identify the extent of the school's weaknesses and as a result, they are not doing enough to make sure all groups of pupils make good progress, particularly the more-able and those known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding. Therefore, they are not doing enough to promote equality of opportunity.
- Plans for improvement are weak. For example, the need for pupils to make good progress in literacy and numeracy is not included in any of the plans for the development. This makes it very difficult for leaders to assess whether their actions are having sufficient impact.

- The way data about pupils' attainment and progress are organised is over-complicated and leaders often have little faith in their accuracy. Leaders do not check the progress of groups of pupils carefully enough and they do not use progress data to effectively evaluate the impact of their leadership decisions.
- Systems to check the quality of teaching lack rigour because insufficient links are made between what teachers do in lessons and the progress pupils make. Leaders, including governors, have not focused sufficiently on linking the quality of teachers' work with their pay progression.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs and abilities of the pupils. Some teachers use too many worksheets and provide activities that do not build on what pupils have already learned; this slows pupils' progress. There have been some improvements to the curriculum and visits and residential activities have helped broaden pupils' experiences. Celebrations for World Book Day, the choir and sporting opportunities are good examples of the way the school is trying to extend learning.
- The school contributes well to pupils' personal development especially their spiritual, moral, and cultural development. For example, pupils have opportunities to learn German at lunchtime and are taught, for example, about Judaism, which helps them increase their understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- The school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding.
- Communication with parents is not effective. Large numbers of parents expressed concerns through Parent View, via email, at the school gate or by telephone that the communication systems do not work and that time is not taken to find out the views of parents. One parent said that 'Some parents now consider complaining to the school a waste of time.' Inspection evidence indicates that school's systems are not robust enough to gauge parents' views.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are well-intentioned, but do not have an accurate view of how the school is doing. This is because they have not questioned the accuracy of the information they have received from senior leaders regarding pupils' achievement and teachers' performance. Consequently, they are not able to contribute enough to improving the school, because they cannot properly challenge senior leaders. Governors have not ensured that leaders have addressed the weaknesses in teaching with enough urgency or made certain that the checks on the quality of teaching have been conducted with sufficient rigour. Governors are unclear about data including the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for this extra support. In other respects, governors meet their statutory responsibilities and, at the time of inspection, all safeguarding arrangements were met.

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	138077
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	413293

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Sarr-Voller
Headteacher	Yvonne Buckley
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2006
Telephone number	01302 539249
Fax number	01302 533929
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