

# Willow Fields Community Primary School

Winslow Close, Witherwack, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR5 5RZ

**Inspection dates** 13–14 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not achieve as consistently as they should. In recent times too few pupils have attained as well as they should by the end of Year 6, given their starting points.
- The progress that young children make in Nursery and Reception classes is not yet fast enough in acquiring the essential skills of speech, language and number.
- The tasks set for young children are occasionally too easy for some or too difficult for others. Opportunities are missed to practise skills and encourage children to initiate their own learning.
- Classroom environments for younger children, both in and outdoors, do not stimulate their thinking and curiosity enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- The drive of the inspirational headteacher has led to exceptional progress in the last year. Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school. Governance is strong and has an accurate grasp of school effectiveness.
- Currently, inspiring and imaginative teaching in Years 1 to 6 enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. At times progress is rapid, including for those pupils supported by extra funding and identified learning needs.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and often exemplary amongst older pupils. Their high levels of enjoyment are evident in their high attendance rates.
- High-quality care and support is provided for pupils. All parents agree.
- Teaching is led and managed highly effectively. As a result, the school is regularly adding to its strengths, although the full impact has yet to be seen in Nursery and Reception classes.
- The interesting curriculum provides excellent first-hand experiences. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly good and underpins all that the school does.
- All staff work tirelessly to make sure that pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life.
- The school enjoys the confidence and trust of both parents and the wider community.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and walks around the school site to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, members of the governing body, school staff, including senior leaders and those with responsibilities such as the leadership of key stages and subjects and the school development partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of pupils' current progress, records from the observation of lessons, pupils' books and the improvement planning. Records relating to behaviour, complaints and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Vernon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Willow Fields is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- Currently, a well above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (which is provided by the government to support the learning of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of members of the armed forces).
- Virtually all pupils are from White British communities. A higher-than-average and an increasing proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal time.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast-club each day.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2011. There have been a significant number of new teaching staff appointments since his arrival, although temporary staffing remains in place in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate rates of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring that indoor and outdoor settings fully occupy and stimulate children's thinking and curiosity
  - continually extending children's language in all activities and provide them with real and motivating opportunities for writing
  - increasing the opportunities to practise their skills with activities that are closely matched to children's abilities
  - helping children to become more independent and able to initiate their own learning.
- Further improve attainment in English and mathematics to at least average by the end of Year 6, and maximise the imaginative and inspiring practice in the school to boost achievement by:
  - pupils continually practising their skills, especially in number and calculation
  - continuing to build upon the effective teaching of letter and sound relationships.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good, a sustained pattern of average attainment as a result of consistently better than expected progress has yet to be sustained at the end of Year 6. The pace of developing early reading, writing and number skills is too variable over time.
- Children enter nursery with skills well below those typical for their age. A large proportion has underdeveloped social, emotional, speech and language skills. Children settle quickly, happily and confidently. Despite this, opportunities are missed to ensure that tasks enable pupils to practise their skills frequently and foster their ability to explore purposefully, whether in a group or for themselves. Consequently, their progress is not fast enough and requires improvement.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is well below average, but there are clear signs of improvement, especially in less well
- -developed number and calculation skills.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2012, attainment fell to well below average in English and mathematics, largely as a result of one-third of pupils with low levels of attainment joining part way through the key stage.
- Currently, as a result of much outstanding teaching, progress rates in reading, writing and mathematics are accelerating rapidly. The imaginative use of themes, such as the Second World War, adds much vitality and brings learning to life such as when pupils write imaginatively about the fears and feelings of Anne Frank confined to an attic, day after day.
- School information, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that attainment is on course to rise to broadly average levels by the end of the current Year 6. More pupils are exceeding nationally expected levels of progress from their individual starting points. This represents higher achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, because their needs are accurately identified and gaps in their learning precisely pinpointed. In Years 1 and 2, improvements are strongly underpinned by highly effective teaching of letter and sound relationships. This encourages increasingly accurate and confident early reading and writing.
- Very successful use is made of pupil premium funding to close gaps in skills between those eligible and other pupils. In the previous year pupils eligible for free school meals in Year 6 attained standards in English and mathematics approximately one term behind those not eligible for additional funding. Currently, the attainment of those pupils eligible for the funding in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with that of their classmates.
- Excellent progress is now being made in nurturing pupils' enjoyment of reading. They are encouraged to read regularly in lessons. Increasingly, younger pupils are using reading to discover things for themselves. Although skills are improving at the age of six, pupils' ability to link letters and the sounds they make to read unfamiliar words and to spell accurately are well below average. Older pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their reading. They are able to discuss in quite some detail an author's style and use of themes. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is broadly average.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. Previous weaknesses in teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2, for example, expectations of what pupils can achieve and variable challenge and pace in lessons have now been successfully addressed. In Years 1 to 6, half of the lessons observed were outstanding, with effective methods adopted leading to high levels of pupil enjoyment and engagement in lessons. There is a happy and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms.
- Interesting experiences, such as stimulating visits, problem-solving challenges and often fascinating visitors help to develop skills in thought-provoking and interesting ways. Methods used encourage pupils to think for themselves, solve problems and explain the decisions, for

example, when studying the plight of not only child evacuees in the Second World War but also nursing mothers. Increasingly, number and calculation skills are systematically practised in all subjects.

- When progress is rapid and achievement high teachers:
  - enjoy excellent relationships with pupils and set high expectations for all activities
  - use pupil information to closely match tasks and activities to each pupil’s ability and needs
  - make use of questions to continually check and stretch pupils’ thinking
  - explain in their marking how well pupils are doing and how they can improve their work.
- In those lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage which require improvement:
  - there is not a non-stop focus on extending children’s listening, speech and language skills
  - opportunities are missed to create interest, provoke curiosity and to urge children to find things out for themselves
  - tasks are not always closely enough matched to the individual abilities of children
  - not enough opportunities are given to children to practise their skills, including their early writing.
- In lessons when achievement is highest, resourceful teaching spurs the imagination of pupils. Teachers’ questioning continually puts pupils thinking to the test. For example, in an English lesson pupils were enthralled when asked to picture the scene from Macbeth of the, ‘weird sisters on the heath’.
- On entry into nursery, children’s needs are quickly spotted and accurately assessed. Extra help for children is competently planned. Although children confidently join in a range of activities in the happy atmosphere, there are insufficient opportunities to stimulate children to become more independent and initiate their own learning in both nursery and reception. Methods used sometimes lack that essential spark to help children think creatively and develop their own ideas.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils’ good and sometimes exemplary behaviour creates a safe, cheerful and pleasant school atmosphere. Pupils are well aware of the boundaries that are set for their conduct. As a result, they are attentive and whole-hearted in their attitudes when in lessons. Pupils display an extremely good grasp of how to avoid risk and danger. All parents indicate that their children are happy and feel safe in school.
- The breakfast-club provides a cheery start to each morning. Adult volunteers join in to provide a strong sense of family. In lessons, the mutual respect between adults and pupils is evident in their relaxed and considerate relationships. Parents, staff and pupils all speak positively about the thoughtful and sensible behaviour around school. Pupils feel that they are listened to, with staff always taking time to take note of any issues they may have.
- Conversations with pupils make it plain that they appreciate what represents bullying. They demonstrate confidence in knowing what to do if they have a worry or concern. Pupils thrive on responsibility and appreciate opportunities to show initiative. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop the self-control and independence of younger children quickly in order to improve the quality of child-initiated exploration and investigation.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now high compared to the national average. Using government funding, routines to manage attendance are now highly effective. This is a remarkable improvement since the previous inspection.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher leads the school with much drive and enthusiasm. He has been resolute in tackling underperformance. A reflective and thoughtful approach to the checking of school performance accurately identifies strengths and areas for development. Any weaknesses are promptly acted upon, although senior leaders recognise that the quality of learning in the Early

Years Foundation Stage requires further strengthening. The headteacher's highly effective leadership underpins the marked improvement in the last two years in the quality of teaching and the emerging pattern of rapid progress and higher achievement.

- Lessons are frequently observed and staff are given encouragement and constructive guidance. Judgements of the quality of teaching and classroom support are accurate. Leaders and managers nurture staff skills and talents extremely well, but this has not yet led to rapid improvement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Training is linked very well to school priorities and staff performance management targets closely matched to rewards and incentives. Good use is made of local authority expertise and partner school support to add to the momentum of improvement.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting activities, carefully matched to the abilities, interests and needs of pupils, although not all areas of learning for younger children are linked in interesting ways. Staff in Years 1 to 6 are inventive at adapting what is provided, constantly adding to the richness of pupils' experiences. This is evident in the methods used to improve speech, reading, writing and number skills. Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well organised. This includes residential experiences in the Lake District.
- The good provision for those pupils with special educational needs is apparent in all aspects of the school's work. Staff work tirelessly to remove any obstacle which slows down pupils' progress. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated.
- The school engages with parents and the wider community extremely well. Increasingly, parents are involved adding to their own skills in order to support their children's learning. Excellent partnership working with the local community, such as the Mother and Toddler group which takes advantage of available facilities, adds to the quality of what the school can offer.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, with much best practice underpinning the high quality of care and support provided for pupils. For example, child-protection procedures are of an excellent quality.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The astutely led governing body displays a detailed grasp of how well the school is doing. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. Their regular training is put to good use in analysing school performance information. They make good use of the headteacher's performance management targets to improve what the school provides. Governors are ambitious for the school and play a strong role holding the school to account and shaping its strategic direction. Finance is managed effectively including the impact of pupil premium funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108783
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	412034

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jonathan Twidle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 553 5365
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