

Willowbrook Primary School

Rosen Crescent, Hutton, Brentwood, CM13 2TU

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6 their attainment is above the national average.
- Leadership is good. Leaders have ensured that improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and this has resulted in pupils making better progress.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to good teaching and the care, guidance and support that is provided.
- Pupils who qualify for additional government funding achieve well, and the gaps between their performance and that of their peers is narrowing rapidly.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and show high levels of care and respect for one another. Attitudes to work are almost always positive.
- The school works hard to keep pupils safe and pupils say they feel safe.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It makes an important contribution to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to school.
- The school has made a good start with the implementation of the new curriculum.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to school life. As a result, children learn effectively and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils do not achieve as well in reading as they do in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively within lessons to support learning.
- The quality of written work in science, geography and history is not as good as it is in English.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out without notice.
- Inspectors observed 19 parts of lessons. One of these lessons was observed jointly with the headteacher. They also observed small-group and whole-school assemblies.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised a sample of their workbooks.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents including development plans, the school's evaluation of its performance, governing body minutes and documentation related to behaviour, child protection and safeguarding.
- The inspection team took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views. They spoke with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day, and looked at responses from a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Willowbrook is an average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language is extremely low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are receiving school support is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is above average.
- The number of pupils who join or leave partway through the year is much higher than in primary schools nationally.
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team. A new headteacher took up post at the beginning of September 2014. The deputy headteacher post was replaced during the summer term by two assistant headteachers.
- The school shares its site with Wind in the Willows Nursery and the Hutton pre-school. These settings are managed independently of the school and are inspected and reported on separately.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon pupils' good knowledge of phonics (linking letters and sounds) by teaching other aspects of reading, such as comprehension, more effectively so that a few of the lower ability pupils, in particular, make better progress.
- Ensure that teaching assistants are deployed more effectively to support pupils' learning during lessons.
- Improve writing standards in science, history and geography by:
 - raising teachers' expectations about the quality of work that can be produced
 - ensuring that the quality of pupils' writing and presentation matches that seen in their English books.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Actions taken by senior and middle leaders have resulted in sustained improvements. Standards are rising and the quality of care, guidance and support is a strength of the school.
- Recent, significant changes to the leadership team have been managed well. The school continues to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis and senior and middle leaders are good role models for staff and pupils. They ensure that the school's good order is maintained along with its warm, caring and purposeful atmosphere.
- The school's self-evaluation is robust and accurate. There are good systems in place to monitor the quality of the school's work. Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly through an analysis of a wide range of evidence and then teachers are set challenging targets to improve. Teachers are also offered good opportunities for professional development, both within school and on external courses. However, the procedures for managing the performance of teaching assistants is not as effective.
- School leaders make regular checks on pupils' attainment to ensure that all groups of pupils are making good progress. Teachers are held to account for how well pupils are performing and, where necessary, school leaders ensure that appropriate support is provided for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. This approach has helped to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well.
- The school has made good preparations for the implementation of the new curriculum. The development of a new assessment system is taking place but is at an early stage.

The school provides a broad range of subjects with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, the quality of written work in subjects such as science, history and geography doesn't always reflect the high standards being achieved in English and mathematics.

- The school is making effective use of the primary sports funding. Sports specialists are being used to promote staff expertise in teaching physical education, and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs are now in existence. Pupils' participation in physical education and sport has increased as a result.
- The school engages well with parents, providing good information on school events and pupils' progress. Regular workshops are held to help parents better understand the school's approach to teaching areas such as phonics and numeracy. These workshops are well attended and appreciated by parents.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the school's commitment to the development of happy and respectful relationships. Through assemblies, and events such as charity fundraising and residential trips, pupils gain a better understanding of themselves, the local community and the wider world in which they live.
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are exemplary and help to ensure that pupils are cared for well.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school and has made a good contribution to the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is effective. It is well led and organised, and governors possess a wide range of relevant skills and experience. Governors are kept well informed about the school's work through regular high quality reports from the headteacher and subject leaders. They also visit school regularly, taking part in focused visits, spending time in classrooms and meeting with senior and middle leaders. They understand school performance data and provide strong support to the school for its continued

improvement. Governors are aware of the new curriculum being introduced.

- Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and understand the link between teachers' pay and their performance. They manage the school's finances well, for example, in the way the pupil premium and primary sports funding are spent. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fully compliant with statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to their work. Teachers and teaching assistants model the sort of behaviour that is expected and regularly praise pupils for behaving well. As a result, pupils are polite, well-mannered and show high levels of care and respect for one another. They play well together in the playground and are calm and sensible when moving round the school. The school's behaviour records show that there are very few incidents of misbehaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. The school has a positive and caring atmosphere and there are good systems in place to ensure that pupils stay safe and secure, including regular risk assessments. As a result, pupils have complete trust in the school's systems for keeping them safe, as do their parents.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to instructions so that they understand what they have to do. They co-operate well with each other when working together or sharing ideas. They understand that good behaviour helps them to do better and improve their work. Pupils of all ages are keen to do well and enjoy having their work celebrated in assembly.
- Pupils spoken to during this inspection had a good understanding of bullying; the different forms it can take and the impact it can have on the lives of those being bullied. They knew what to do if they were being bullied and were confident that, if a problem arose with bullying, the school would quickly sort it out. Pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 also showed a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility from the earliest age. The children in the Reception class self-register each morning and older pupils are able to contribute to the school community by serving on the school council, which has regular links with the school's governing body and was recently involved in a review of the school's lunchtime menu.
- Attendance has been above the national average for the past three years. The school regularly stresses the importance of good attendance and has made clear the effect that absence has on pupils' achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school and occasionally it is outstanding. Consequently, most pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good progress and achieve well.
- The relationships between pupils and the adults who teach them are excellent. Pupils are respectful and polite. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to work co-operatively and value each other's thoughts and contributions. As a result, pupils work well with each other and develop high self-esteem.
- The marking of pupils' work had been identified as an area requiring improvement by school leaders. Over recent months teachers have worked hard to improve this aspect of their work and the quality of marking and feedback provided to pupils is now of a good standard. Teachers mark work thoroughly and regularly, highlighting strengths and areas for development. Pupils respond well to the good advice provided.
- Well planned and exciting activities are used to enthuse pupils during lessons. This was evident in a literacy lesson where the teacher first projected an extract from a book and then used a film clip to develop the pupils' understanding of how to create tension when writing a story.

- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and generally provide good support particularly for those pupils at risk of falling behind with their work. However, a lack of direction from some teachers means that teaching assistants spend too much time observing the teacher rather than working with pupils.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress in mathematics and writing. Overall progress in reading, though good, is not quite as rapid for a few pupils. The teaching of phonics is effective, but some lower ability pupils aren't taught other aspects of reading, such as comprehension, well enough. Consequently, they do not become fluent, competent readers as quickly as they could.
- Teachers do not always have the same high expectations of pupils' written work in subjects such as geography, history and science. Sometimes they accept work that is poorly presented.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Children start at the school with knowledge and skills that are generally below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they start in Year 1, the majority have developed the skills and knowledge required for the next stage of their education.
- In Year 1, pupils make good progress in their understanding of phonics because teachers and teaching assistants model pronunciation clearly and accurately. In the 2013 phonics screening check, at the end of Year 1 pupils attained higher than the national average. The results in 2014 improved further.
- Pupils make good progress in Year 2. In 2013 attainment at the end of Year 2 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. It improved in 2014, as more pupils made even faster progress and attained higher levels in writing and mathematics. However, progress in reading, while good, was not as rapid.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 2. Writing is well taught. Pupils are given opportunities in English lessons to write at length and teachers provide good advice to pupils about how to improve their work. The teaching of mathematics is also effective. Pupils of all abilities receive challenging work and are given targets for improvement. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to apply the mathematics skills they are learning to real life situations.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in reading across Key Stage 2. More-able pupils read extensively and achieve well. However, a few lower ability pupils make slower progress and they report that they do not read very often at home.
- Pupils who join the school at different times are well supported. As a result, they settle quickly into the school and usually make good progress. These pupils do not always attain as well as other pupils, especially when they start at the school significantly below their expected levels.
- The school has been effective in closing the gap in the performance in English between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were on average two terms ahead of other pupils, both within the school and nationally. The gap in mathematics is also narrowing and attainment is now in line with the national average. However the in-school gap remains and disadvantaged pupils are approximately two terms behind their class mates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They benefit from the school's highly effective approach to supporting children and their families.
- By the time pupils leave this school most have developed the knowledge and skills necessary for the next stage in their education. The percentage of pupils reaching higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average.

The early years provision is good

- The school ensures that parents contribute fully to the initial assessments that are made of children's starting points before they join the school. This means that children experience few problems settling in to school life and are provided with learning opportunities which are appropriate to their needs.
- Most children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are below that typical of children of their age. Children quickly become self-confident in the caring atmosphere that the school provides and learn how to get along with others. With good teaching, based on a clear understanding of how well each child is doing, they make good progress in all areas and improve their communication skills.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of children and plan a broad range of activities. Planning initially concentrates on personal and social development, leading children to quickly develop self-confidence and independence. Careful and accurate assessments help teachers and teaching assistants to establish where additional support is required.
- The school's records show that most children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage having achieved the early learning goals for their age. This means they start in Year 1 having developed the skills and knowledge which are required for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide a good level of care, guidance and support. Safeguarding is effective and there are good procedures in place to ensure that children are safe at all times whilst in school.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well resourced. Both inside and outside there are bright, exciting areas where children are keen to learn.
- The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There are very good relationships between staff and children. Parents are appreciative of the approachability of staff and say their children are happy to attend school.

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	115041
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	448459

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Russell
Headteacher	Clare Branton
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2009
Telephone number	01277 214662
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