

Willowbrook School

Summer Lane, Exeter, EX4 8NN

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher motivates all who work and learn here. Their aspirational drive has secured good and improving teaching and learning through a period of staff turbulence.
- Middle leaders share the senior leaders' determination to improve outcomes for all pupils. They make significant contributions to the effectiveness of teaching and progress of pupils, particularly in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, pupils' achievement is good and improving. This includes those pupils eligible for free school meals who achieve at least as well as other disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Children in early years achieve exceptionally well. Outstanding teaching and the seamless quality of learning in all areas results in children making rapid progress.
- High-quality training is rapidly improving teaching.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and attend regularly. They say that they are happy in school and that bullying is rare.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They have good relationships with their teachers; they work hard and contribute well in lessons.
- The curriculum is outstanding and successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The wide range of visits, visitors and enrichment opportunities extend pupils' life experiences and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of all that the school does for their children. Parents particularly welcome the opportunities the family reading initiatives have created and many, alongside their children, are re-discovering their own love of books.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are highly effective in both challenging and supporting the school and its leaders to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More-able pupils do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because teaching activities do not always match their needs.
- Although teachers' marking and feedback follow the school policy, it is not always sharply focused on what the pupil needs to do next to make more rapid progress.
- Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. This is evident in the quality, depth and presentation of the work in pupils' books. Pupils do not always take enough pride in their work or complete it with care.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 15 lessons or parts of lessons, on some occasions jointly with the deputy headteacher. They also heard pupils read and attended a visitor assembly.
- The quality of work in pupils' books was scrutinised by the inspectors.
- Inspectors visited classrooms, accompanied by the deputy headteacher, to look at the quality of the curriculum, site safety, and pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and three members, and the designated officer for child protection, as well as a number of middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the views of parents through discussions at the beginning and end of the day and through the 11 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire).
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised by the inspectors including the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, self-evaluation records, safeguarding policies, curriculum policies, school special educational needs provision, the governing body minutes, external moderation reports and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils around the school and during break times, and observed behaviour during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered the responses from 19 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Lyn McNamara, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Neech

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cliff Mainey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The mobility of pupils in the school is higher than the national average.
- Early years provision is organised into a Nursery class and two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the more-able pupils achieve the higher levels of which they are capable by teachers planning activities that fully challenge them.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that marking and feedback is consistently matched to pupils' abilities and focused precisely on what pupils need to do next to improve their work
 - insisting that all teachers' expectations of work presentation are high enough and that pupils always take pride in their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is an excellent role model and leads by example. Achievement is improving because of her clarity of purpose, uncompromising expectations and resolute determination to secure the best teaching and learning she can on behalf of the pupils.
 - Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have established a culture of continuous improvement. They have sharpened the focus on all aspects of teaching and learning. Pupils' progress meetings are challenging and quickly identify pupils that are not making the progress of which they are capable. Swift support is put in place and then closely monitored for impact. Should progress not improve quickly enough then support is reviewed and adapted to suit specific needs.
 - The school's self-evaluation is accurate and securely based on the school's tracking of individuals. School leaders check and evaluate all aspects of the school's work rigorously which results in the good and improving achievement for pupils. Leaders have rightly identified the progress of more-able pupils as an area for development so that more pupils achieve the highest levels.
 - The curriculum is outstanding and has been devised by school leaders to successfully meet the new government requirements. The inspiring range of sport, music and art experiences is successful in developing an enthusiasm and thirst for learning in pupils of all ages.
 - The quality of the curriculum has had an impressive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It offers a wide range of opportunities for pupils to experience life and aim high for their future. For example, assemblies from inspirational figures, such as Olympic athletes, and regular opportunities to perform music and drama help to develop their self-confidence. Pupils also talk confidently about their understanding of other faiths and cultures. They recognise that some of their friends come from cultures that are different to their own and they say that difference is respected. This is developing pupils' understanding of modern British values well.
 - There is a strong sense of team spirit amongst the staff and morale is high. Staff are offered and embrace opportunities to develop their professional skills and share what works best with colleagues. One staff member explained: 'All staff here support each other and we are happy to share our ideas about teaching. We do this with one goal in mind – to give the children the best possible learning experience.'
 - Leaders have made excellent use of the primary sports premium funding to encourage pupils to consider healthy lifestyles, improve their sport skills and develop resilience, confidence and aspiration. Specialist sports coaches have co-taught alongside teachers. This has ensured high-quality sports training for the pupils and improvements to the subject knowledge and skill of the teachers.
 - The use of pupil premium funding by school leaders has been highly effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all. This funding has enabled the headteacher to employ specialist staff to support learning throughout the school. The quality of the school's work in this area and the difference it is making in raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been recognised more widely.
 - Leaders, governors and staff are all aware of their shared responsibility for the safety of pupils. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and staff are well trained in the school's procedures and systems. Record-keeping is thorough and well organised. The school's recruitment processes and checks on new staff are robust.
 - The local authority has a good relationship with the school. It acknowledges the rigour of the school's systems to maintain good teaching and learning, and has shared its strengths within the authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are ambitious for the school and share the passion and drive of the headteacher to achieve the best outcomes that they can for all pupils. There is a range of expertise and experience on the governing body which is utilised well. Governors are keen to know why outcomes are as they are and they keenly challenge the headteacher. They are proactive in determining the reasons for any weakness noted and then firmly support the headteacher to improve.
 - Governors are fully aware of where teaching is strong and where it needs to improve further. They have supported and encouraged senior leaders to establish a team of excellent teachers and there is a culture of sharing what works best. Additionally, governors view themselves as learners within this learning community. They have ensured, through governor forums, that they acquire the necessary level of knowledge and understanding to make informed contributions to school improvement planning.
 - Governors recognise the challenge faced by the school with regard to the progress of disadvantaged pupils, and have supported and closely monitored the deployment of both pupil premium and sport premium funding.

- Governors hold all teachers to account for the progress and achievement of the pupils within their class. They can, and do, withhold pay progression when targets are not met.
- Governors have a keen sense of responsibility with regard to statutory safeguarding procedures and monitor these closely.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, pupils behave well and are enthusiastic in their responses to the teacher. They are industrious and work purposefully. There is a high level of independence in learning across the whole school, and even the very youngest children know where to go for equipment or help if they are finding something tricky.
- Pupils know and can explain that they have to persevere for their learning to improve. However, they do not yet always have the same level of pride in their own work and presentation in books.
- Pupils play harmoniously at break times and lunchtimes. They are happy in school, have good manners and are very proud of their school.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with each other and with the staff. All adults model their high expectations of respect and pupils respond positively. The older children understand that they have an important responsibility to look after the younger pupils in the school and they do this well. This was seen during mixed cohort sessions in Key Stage 2 when, led by Year 6 sport leaders, pupils of all ages collaborated successfully to extend their understanding of Samoan culture and make Samoan headdresses in art.
- The headteacher's record-keeping and behaviour logs are meticulously kept and clearly indicate that behaviour is improving and serious incidents are on the decline.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils acknowledge that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree that their children are happy and safe.
- Pupils have an awareness of bullying and the different forms it can take. They say that bullying is rare and that, if it happens, it is dealt with swiftly by staff. Records confirm this is the case.
- Pupils are taught and understand how to keep themselves safe. The younger children are taught how to use equipment carefully and play safely. The older pupils have a growing understanding of the wider concepts of staying safe and talk about e-safety and the dangers of social media. The school realises that training for older pupils to help them recognise and avoid other risks to their safety, such as understanding the risks associated with extreme views, needs to be further developed. Appropriate plans to rectify this are in place.
- The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance, which is now broadly in line with national average and improving year on year.

The quality of teaching is good

- The strong focus by leaders on developing all teachers in the school, including those new to the profession, has ensured that teaching is consistently good and improving. Middle leaders make significant contributions to this aspect of school improvement. For example, the school's focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar has been led by the literacy leader. This work is rapidly improving pupil outcomes.
- Reading is a strength and pupils have a love of books. There has been a successful focus on renewing and igniting a passion for reading across the school. The refurbishment of the library; the purchase of a significant number of new and enticing books; the appointment of a library assistant; the involvement of pupil librarians; and exciting reading initiatives have resulted in improved reading standards.
- Letters and sounds (phonics) is taught well because teachers use resources effectively to support learning. The inspector observed a lesson during which the children used magnifying glasses as word detectives to look closely at some letters and sound them out. This increased the intensity of the session and made the learning experience more memorable.
- Teachers take care to make writing interesting and relevant to the children and the community in which they live and so pupils become enthusiastic writers from an early age. Pupils have been taught how to

draft their writing into interesting sentences using the correct punctuation and grammar. In Year 4, pupils confidently worked together to improve the way they wrote their instructions on how to make pancakes. However, expectations of the way in which pupils present their work are not always high enough.

- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils acquire basic skills early and are then able to build on this solid foundation as they progress through school. In Year 5 and Year 6, and pupils say they enjoy mathematics. They are confident about their skills and abilities in the subject and, because of this, they are well prepared to move on to secondary school. However, not enough more-able pupils are attaining the higher levels because too much learning time is wasted in repeating work that they already understand. For example, they are not given enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge and ability to think and reason mathematically.
- Most teachers apply the marking and feedback policy consistently and pupils are clear about the use of different coloured pens to indicate achievement and areas for improvement. One pupil told the inspector: 'Pink is good but green is better!' This established approach means that pupils are searching for ways to improve every day. However, where teachers do not follow the established principles set by the school, their work has less impact on pupils' achievement, particularly for the more able.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children start school with skills that are lower, and some significantly lower, than those typical for their age. The school's well-developed transition and early support programme is deliberately focused on language development and the personal, social and emotional well-being of children, and as a result, children make rapid progress. By the time children reach the end of their Foundation Stage, they are making and exceeding good levels of development and achieving well.
- The exceptional progress children make in Reception means that they are well prepared for Year 1 and already see themselves as successful learners. Children's positive attitudes to learning, combined with good phonics teaching (letters and the sounds they make), ensure that children continue to achieve well. This year, an above proportion of Year 1 children met the national level in the phonics screening check.
- Attainment at Year 2 continues to be broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has large numbers of pupils both joining and leaving the school each year. When the effect of this is taken into consideration, tracking information indicates that pupils do continue to make good progress through Key Stage 1 and achieve levels that exceed the national average.
- Improving standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar has been a school priority. Spelling, punctuation and grammar is now taught well across the school. Pupils are demonstrating, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, that they have a good range and understanding of punctuation and grammar, and can apply it appropriately to different ways of writing.
- In the 2014 Year 6 tests in writing and mathematics, pupils achieved standards broadly in line with those nationally. In the reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar tests, standards were well below national averages. However, work scrutiny, tracking information and the recent local authority moderated writing results indicate that current achievement is much stronger in all core subjects.
- In the 2014 Year 6 tests, fewer more-able pupils achieved the higher levels than nationally in all core subjects. Inspection evidence confirms that this trend is set to continue but there is an improving picture. Currently, their progress is as expected for their age group, and in writing, it exceeds expectations.
- Within school, gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils are continuing to narrow in reading, writing, mathematics, and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Disadvantaged pupils now achieve broadly in line with non-disadvantaged. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were achieving better than other disadvantaged pupils nationally in writing and mathematics, and they were less than a term behind in reading. However, in spelling, punctuation and grammar, disadvantaged pupils were four terms behind national attainment. Present progress evident in lessons, books and assessment information indicates this gap has significantly narrowed.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress. They are helped to learn through well-organised learning programmes tailored to their needs and skilled teaching staff, including specialist support.

The early years provision**is outstanding**

- Early years leadership is exceptionally strong. The leader has created a cohesive team, all of whom have high expectations. The strength and quality of provision, the links made with parents and the progress of the children have continued to be outstanding during the absence of the Early Years leader.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers have a high level of understanding about the early development of children and make secure assessments about their skills and abilities. They use this information to plan the next step in learning and ensure that they make rapid and sustained progress. As a consequence, children are well prepared to make a successful move to Year 1.
- Children start school with weaker skills in reading and writing. This is identified early and the focus on language and teaching of letters and sounds given high priority. Teachers have made the writing areas inviting and interesting places to be. As a result, children choose to practise their writing skills independently. One child invited the inspector to join in with the writing and was able to use phonics to construct a sentence and then to self-correct a spelling error.
- Children listen well to stories and are often enthralled as they listen. They have regular rhyme, story and song times in the library and they join in and sing with gusto. These early, joyful experiences linked to reading establish a clear and growing love of books and eagerness to be readers.
- Early years classrooms and the outdoor areas are prepared with careful thought by the teachers in order to make them lively, stimulating and rich in learning opportunities. As a consequence, children are engaged and excited about all that they are doing. This positive attitude maintains their concentration and begins to build within them a willingness to keep on working hard at a task in order to succeed.
- The behaviour of children throughout early years is exemplary. Staff have established clear routines and expectations of behaviour and, as a result, children are polite, kind and helpful. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the high-quality care and guidance of staff has enabled their children to thrive and enjoy school.
- Children know how to keep themselves safe in their play and at social times, such as lunchtimes. They know how to take care when laying their own table for lunch and how to use equipment like scissors safely.

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	132778
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	461785

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	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victoria Rollason
Headteacher	Molly Marlow
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2012
Telephone number	01392 466208
Email address	admin@willowbrook.devon.sch.uk

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