

# The Willows CofE Primary

The Willows North, Alcester Road, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 9QN

## Inspection dates

22–23 September 2015

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Progress in mathematics for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, is too slow. Too few make good progress.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, the most able, those who are disabled and those with special educational needs is too variable.
- Although leaders have taken action to improve the progress of pupils in mathematics, this has lacked urgency and improvements are too slow.
- Leaders do not use the information that they have about pupils' progress effectively or efficiently to identify how well groups of pupils are progressing.
- Governors do not have an accurate understanding of the school's areas for improvement. Consequently, they are not able to check that leaders are taking appropriate action.
- Senior leaders do not provide governors with all the information they need to judge the school's effectiveness accurately.
- While leaders, managers and governors have been effective in bringing about a number of improvements since the last inspection, they have an overgenerous view of some aspects of the school.
- Teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in Key Stage 2, are too variable. They are not consistently good.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. In some classes, pupils are given work that is too easy or that they have done before. Teachers do not realise this quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Early years provision is good. This is because it is well led and managed and the teaching is good.
- Pupils take pride in their school and in wearing their school uniform. They behave extremely well and are respectful to one another and to adults. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve exceptionally well in writing.
- The curriculum is well thought out and led effectively. It provides pupils with many relevant, exciting and interesting opportunities. As a result, pupils have a well-developed social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress of all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able, those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations about what pupils can achieve so that activities require pupils to think and work hard
  - enabling all teachers to use the information they have about pupils' past progress to plan learning that builds on what pupils already know and broadens their understanding
  - deploying the classroom-based teaching assistants effectively throughout lessons to maximise the progress that pupils make
  - ensuring that teachers use their questioning skills effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and broaden their skills
  - making sure that pupils do not mark time in lessons by completing tasks that are well within their capabilities.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - assessment information about groups of pupils, including the most able, disadvantaged and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, is analysed frequently, effectively and efficiently to check that these pupils are making good progress
  - frequent checks take place to measure the impact of the school's work so that the pace of improvement can be measured and alternative actions taken if progress is too slow
  - improvement plans identify the precise actions that leaders will take and how the success of these will be measured at key points throughout the year
  - governors are presented with the information they need to be able to check on the effectiveness of the senior leaders' actions, including information about how well groups of pupils are progressing and robust external validation of the school's work
  - governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the procedures for monitoring the impact of the school's work are not sufficiently rigorous. In addition, the school does not receive any external challenge about its work and, as a result, leaders, including governors, have an overgenerous view of some aspects of the school.
- Senior leaders and governors are committed to making improvements in the school and have correctly identified that mathematics and the progress of the most able and disadvantaged pupils are key priorities. However, improvements have been too slow. Due to a lack of focused analysis of the information about the progress of these groups of pupils, leaders and governors do not know which improvement actions are working and which are less successful.
- The school's plans for improvement do not state precisely how the success of actions will be measured. This makes it difficult for senior and middle leaders and governors to use the plans to check whether their actions are making a difference.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide a broad range of small group and individual support. Resources have also been purchased to support learning, for example a building bricks club supports those pupils who need help with their social skills. Adults understand the needs of individual pupils well and have a detailed system in place to record the support that is provided for each one. However, due to a lack of focused analysis of the assessment information for this group of pupils, leaders are not able to identify if these actions are accelerating the progress of these pupils as a group. This is also the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. It is well thought out and is led effectively by the deputy headteacher. An appropriate range of subjects is taught, which is supplemented with interesting after-school clubs such as conservation, radio, knitting and film. In addition, the range of visitors, for example artists and poets, and the school trips make a strong contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils.
- Pupils learn about people from a range of faiths and cultures through the curriculum, and have links with a number of other countries. As a result, pupils' understanding of life in a multicultural society is good and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum includes planned opportunities for pupils to learn about British values, for example the Year 6 'Yes Minister' topic, which includes a visit to the Houses of Parliament.
- The school keeps parents well informed through regular newsletters and encourages their feedback through 'parent voice' meetings. The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and those who completed the online survey, Parent View, are supportive of the school and would recommend it to others.
- Leadership of early years is good. The leader is ambitious to improve provision and has visited other settings to observe good practice. Subsequently, she has provided training in order to improve the way in which adults at The Willows observe and record information about the children's learning. She uses this assessment information to adapt the teaching and the classroom environments to the needs of the children.
- The procedure for managing the performance of teachers in the school is appropriate.
- The additional sports funding received by the school from the government is used to provide a broad range of support to improve the quality of physical education in the school, to increase pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and to increase the number of competitive sports available to pupils. The impact of this work has not been checked.
- The local authority has been too slow to provide challenge and support for this school. In addition, the school has been reticent in its engagement with the local authority and a suitable working relationship has not yet been established.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
  - They do not have clear systems in place to fully hold the school to account. Governors are too reliant on the information that the school's senior leaders present and do not have other ways of checking that the

information is accurate. As a result, they are not able to provide robust challenge to senior leaders.

- Although governors visit the school, these visits are not planned purposefully or linked with school improvement actions.
- Governors are not able to check closely the impact of the pupil premium funding because they do not receive any analysis of how well this group of pupils is progressing. As a result, they do not know if the funding is improving the progress of all eligible pupils.
- Governors receive appropriate information about how pay progression is linked to the quality of teaching.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders are proactive in their work with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. All staff understand the procedures to follow if they are worried about a pupil. Any concerns raised are followed up quickly. Leaders have considered specific aspects of child protection that may have relevance in this school. For example, teaching staff have received training on the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement**

- Teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because, although there are many aspects of good teaching in the school, this is not consistently the case across all classes and subjects. This is particularly the case in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers too often underestimate the standards which pupils are capable of reaching within lessons. This is because they are not making best use of the range of assessment information they have about pupils. Although all teachers plan work at different levels of difficulty for pupils of different abilities, some teachers are not yet skilled in moving pupils on to more difficult work as soon as they are ready. Teachers do not always get the level of difficulty right at the beginning of the lesson for the most-able pupils.
- Where pupils' learning is less effective, teaching assistants are not deployed effectively and spend extended periods of time listening to the teacher without providing pupils with any support. Teachers do not notice quickly enough when work is too easy or if pupils need extra support to get started in their learning. This results in pupils marking time until they can have a go at an activity that is at the right level for them, or they lose concentration because they do not quite understand what to do. In addition, teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions or require pupils to explain their thinking.
- Where pupils' learning is effective, no time is wasted and there is a sense of urgency about learning. Pupils are asked questions that require them to think hard and explain their answers and teachers target specific questions at the least- and most-able pupils. Teaching assistants work in partnership with the teacher to promote good progress throughout lessons and the planned activities build on what pupils have previously learned. The topics that are taught are relevant and interesting and teachers organise activities that engage pupils' interest. This results in pupils having positive attitudes to learning.
- The introduction of the bronze, silver and gold level tasks has been successful in giving pupils a choice about their learning. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy choosing the gold task as it is the hardest and they enjoy a challenge. This system is not yet fully effective because the gold challenge is not always hard enough.
- Practical equipment is used effectively in the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 1, particularly to support the less-able pupils. These resources help pupils to visualise the mathematical concept they are learning about and help pupils to explain their thinking.
- Pupils are given opportunities to explain and develop their opinions and ideas in a range of subjects. This helps them to learn to listen to and respect what others think. As a result, pupils are reflective about and accepting of those who have different ideas and beliefs.
- The teaching of writing is effective and pupils make good progress. This is, in part, because of teachers' high expectations and also because pupils have opportunities to practise their skills in a number of different subjects.
- Teaching in the early years is good.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They show respect for one another. They are confident to speak to adults and visitors to the school. For example, the youngest pupils new to the school in the Reception classes spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their classrooms and their activities.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. They take pride in their appearance and in the way they present their work. They understand the importance of trying their best and are not put off if they get things wrong.
- All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that school is a safe and secure place to play and learn. Pupils trust the adults to sort out squabbles when they arise and look after them if they get hurt.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils explained to inspectors the importance of using a strong password when computing. Younger pupils could explain that it is important not to give out personal information, make friends online with someone not known to them or visit websites unsuitable for children their age.
- Pupils have been taught effectively about bullying. They can identify different forms of bullying including physical, emotional and racist. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is extremely rare at The Willows, but if it happens adults will listen and act quickly to sort it out.
- Through the curriculum pupils learn how to make healthy eating choices and about the importance of regular exercise.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, pupils and staff agree that this is so. In lessons and around school, pupils understand how to behave and they follow the school rules. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and there is a consistent system in place in all classes to discourage behaviour that is less than acceptable. School records verify that incidents of poor behaviour, including those of a racist nature, are rare. Playtimes and lunchtimes are busy, sociable and active times of the day.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully to adults and are keen to learn new things. As a result, teachers rarely have to interrupt lessons to deal with off-task behaviour. Classrooms and corridors are typically well organised and tidy with colourful displays that support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements.
- Pupils arrive at school on time and attendance rates are above the national average for primary schools. There are only a small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school and leaders have systems in place to follow up on this.

## Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because not all groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics, make good progress throughout the school.
- The rates of progress in early years and Key Stage 1 are better than those seen in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This demonstrates good progress across Key Stage 1. This positive picture is not sufficiently built upon throughout Key Stage 2 in mathematics. Although pupils leave the school with above average levels of attainment, this does not always demonstrate that they have made good progress from the end of Key Stage 1. Progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 2 is stronger than that seen in mathematics.
- Progress in mathematics is too slow because teachers' expectations in this subject are not always high enough and pupils sometimes have to complete work that is too easy.
- Writing is a strength of the school. Pupils in all year groups make good progress in their writing, in part because they have opportunities to practise their skills in a range of subjects. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, their attainment is well above the national average and they are well prepared in this area to start Year 7.
- School leaders do not analyse assessment information so they can identify the progress of different groups of pupils. However, evidence from inspectors' sampling of pupils' books, lesson observations and

information about pupils' progress shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils, the most able, those who are disabled and those with special educational needs is too variable. Some of these pupils make expected and good progress. However, a proportion make less than the expected amount of progress. This is highly variable between subjects and year groups.

- Children join the early years with skills and abilities that are typical for children of their age. As a result of effective teaching, learning and assessment they make good progress in all the areas of learning. They achieve above average standards at the end of the year and are in a good position to begin Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have access to a broad range of books by different authors from the school library and in classroom collections. By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who meet the required standard in phonics (the sounds that letters make) is well above the national average. However, in some classes, the teaching of reading that builds on this knowledge of letters and their sounds is not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils spend too much time answering simple questions about the books they read and this slows down the progress that they make.

## Early years provision

is good

- Provision in the early years is good because it is well led and managed and teaching is good. The leader uses the information she collects about children's progress to inform her actions. Where weaknesses are identified, she adapts the provision accordingly, to better meet the needs of the children. As a result, children make good progress, achieve above-average outcomes and are well prepared to begin Year 1 by the end of the year.
- The leader is ambitious to improve the provision and has provided training for the adults working in the early years. In addition, she responded swiftly to the findings of an external review of the provision and made the recommended improvements. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good.
- Children settle quickly into school life and establish positive relationships from the outset. The inspection took place early in the school year and children were already able to demonstrate an understanding of the routines, played happily together and behaved well. In addition, they were confident to speak to the inspectors who visited their lessons – showing that they feel safe and secure.
- The indoor and outdoor learning areas are well organised and purposeful. Space is used well to provide children with a broad range of engaging and open-ended activities. Resources are accessible and varied and enable children to use their imagination and be creative.
- Children who have additional needs or who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and support is provided, for example for children who have delays in speaking.
- Teaching encourages children to develop good communication skills and a love of learning that helps them to be well prepared to move into Year 1. For example, in an adult-led activity that was observed, children made masks of the characters from *The very hungry caterpillar* and enthusiastically retold the story using props. These activities captured the children's imagination and maintained their interest over an extended period of time.
- On occasion, adults miss opportunities to extend children's play. For example, during a board game activity, mathematical language was not introduced or reinforced.
- Adults keep detailed records of children's learning. These 'learning journeys' are shared with parents, who are welcomed into the setting. Parents who spoke to inspectors are confident that their children are safe, well looked after and expected to behave well. Parents stated that they had received a good level of information to help them and their children get ready for starting school and this had made the transition smooth.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125681
<b>Local authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10000465

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Lindsay
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janis McBride
<b>Telephone number</b>	01789 205811
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.willows.warwickshire.sch.uk">www.willows.warwickshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	admin3204@we-learn.com
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–13 March 2012

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Less than one fifth of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are cared for by the local authority). This is lower than the national average.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. This is also the case for pupils who do not speak English as their first language.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- Early years provision takes the form of two full-time reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- During the two-day inspection, inspectors observed lessons and conducted learning walks around the school, several of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' current workbooks and some from the last academic year.
- A group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school. Inspectors also spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also heard pupils from Year 1 and 2 read.
- Inspectors met with three representatives of the governing body including the Chair and Vice-Chair, and spoke to a fourth governor on the telephone. Meetings were also held with senior leaders, teachers with responsibilities for subject areas, the leader in charge of safeguarding and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents provided by the school, including information relating to pupils' progress and attainment, attendance, safeguarding and the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were gathered by speaking to parents at the beginning and end of the school day and from the 44 responses to the online survey, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Rachel Howie, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Adam Hewett	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector
Charalambos Loizou	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marilyn Mottram	Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)