

The Willows Church of England Primary School

The Willows North, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9QN

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Because the quality of teaching and assessment is not yet consistently strong, pupils are not making good enough progress to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils have to make up ground because over time their progress has been too slow.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in writing at length and across different subjects.
- Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not high enough.
- Pupils do not achieve well in mathematics, because they do not have enough chances to solve practical problems.
- Some teachers do not consistently provide the right level of work for the range of ability in class.
- The role of middle leaders is at an early stage of development and so they are not yet contributing fully to school improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment in January 2017, the headteacher has provided committed leadership. She and the senior leadership team have identified the correct priorities to improve the school and are working hard to address them. As a result, teaching and outcomes are improving.
- Effective teaching of phonics helps younger pupils make rapid gains in their reading.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils behave well and are keen learners.
- In early years, children are happy to learn and make good progress. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Governors are committed and ambitious for the future of the school. They provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and assessment so that pupils make consistently strong rates of progress by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically by applying their skills to a wider variety of practical problems
 - setting work at the right level of difficulty so pupils can make better progress
 - ensuring that pupils are given more experience of writing at length and in different subjects so that they become more confident writers
 - further developing the role that middle leaders play in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within their subject areas.
- Further develop strategies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils to increase their chances of achieving well in school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, not yet having been in post for a full year, provides inspirational leadership. She is passionate about providing the best possible education so that pupils have the opportunity to achieve their best. A well-qualified and determined governing body and leadership team ably support her.
- Since the last inspection, school leaders have been determined to create a culture of high aspiration, where children, regardless of their background, are given the opportunity to achieve in a caring, well-disciplined environment. As a result, outcomes are improving.
- Leaders have introduced a robust system for checking the progress and attainment of pupils in each year group. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subjects they are responsible for monitoring. Some subject leaders are relatively new to their roles and are not yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring of teaching, and this affects the quality of the support they can offer.
- Senior leaders make good use of information from regular checks on teaching and learning to develop teachers' skills and improve teaching. Targets set for teachers are closely linked to pupils' achievement and show that their skills have improved. However, not all teachers are confident in making the best use of assessment information to plan work to match the needs of all groups of pupils.
- The curriculum is vibrant. Pupils enjoy topics that appeal to their imagination. For example, pupils enjoy learning about the 'The Romans' and 'Our changing world'. They bring together aspects of many different subject areas, including history, geography and art. The topics effectively develop pupils' interests and ensure that they acquire knowledge in a range of subjects. Pupils greatly enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They include drama, conservation and film club. These activities nurture pupils' interests and develop their skills well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Through assemblies and teaching, the school successfully promotes values such as determination, responsibility, respect and tolerance. Leaders ensure that any form of discrimination is not tolerated. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Special educational needs funding is effectively used to support pupils' needs. The work of the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is successful in ensuring that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are met and that they are well supported. As a result, provision for these pupils has improved.
- The pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately. Each pupil is identified, their needs assessed and funds used to give additional support, as required, or assistance for educational visits and events. Consequently, differences in attainment compared with other pupils are diminishing.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively. It

has increased pupils' participation in sport. The school now provides a much wider range of sporting opportunities and inter-school competitions. For example, pupils participate in South Warwickshire cross-country running, tag rugby and netball. A dedicated sport coach organise lunchtime sports, such as football. As a result, pupils develop healthier lifestyles and improved physical well-being.

- The local authority has supported the school well through the regular monitoring visits of an educational adviser. The school has drawn on a variety of other outside help and support.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has taken effective steps to improve its oversight of the school's work since the last inspection. Governors have received up-to-date training and streamlined the way they hold school leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, including how it compares with other schools, how well different groups of pupils achieve and the quality of teaching. In addition to their own regular visits to the school, governors gather evidence about the school from reports and presentations from the school leaders and from talking to pupils and parents.
- Governors ensure that action is taken if teaching falls below the required standard. They have a good understanding of school finances, including how the pupil premium, special educational needs and primary PE and sport funding is spent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has ensured that all staff and governors have read and acted upon the latest guidance on keeping children safe, including the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. The school works very well with its key partners to ensure that all pupils are safe and cared for well. The school helps parents and carers understand the importance of adopting safe practices such as using the internet safely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Changes made by school leaders this year have resulted in improvement and pupils' progress is accelerating. Training opportunities for staff and sharing good practice have improved the quality of teaching. However, this has yet to have a marked impact on pupils' learning over time.
- Some pupils are given work that is not sufficiently matched to their learning needs. This means that for these pupils, work is too easy and for others it is too hard. Consequently, this slows pupils' learning and they do not make the progress they should.
- The teaching of mathematics is helping pupils to secure basic skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities overall for pupils to use their mathematical skills to reason and solve real-life problems.

- Teachers ensure that pupils develop their skills in writing in different styles and for different purposes well. Pupils develop the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. For instance, in a key stage 2 lesson, pupils wrote well-structured, clear summary paragraphs. They reflected the feelings and experience of an individual whose life as a Canadian pilot in the Second World War they had been studying. However, pupils do not have enough chances to practise their skills in long pieces of written work and across other subjects.
- The effective teaching of phonics has ensured that pupils can build words accurately and read unfamiliar texts. They understand what they are reading well. Pupils took pride in demonstrating their reading skills to the inspectors and showed that they understood the text well. Older pupils have favourite authors, such as Michael Morpurgo, and poetry by Pie Corbett.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and have clear expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ask searching questions that get pupils thinking about, and recognising how much they have learned. For example, in a key stage 1 lesson, the teacher asked searching questions to challenge pupils to explain the method and reasoning used to arrive at their calculations.
- Other adults make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in lessons, particularly for those who find learning difficult. They work well to support the less able pupils, using appropriate teaching resources effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils develop as exceptionally well-rounded individuals and confident, self-assured learners. They rise very well to challenge and persevere even when they are finding it difficult.
- 'The school has a lovely pastoral caring approach to its pupils, and both my children are extremely happy at school and progressed very well in their learning.' This comment is typical of the views expressed by parents about the high-quality care and support and attention to pupils.
- Pupils have very good social skills and strong moral values. This is because they have frequent opportunities to work together in lessons and they develop good levels of mutual respect as a result.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They know how to keep safe online and know how to protect their personal information. Pupils also show a strong awareness of safety in other situations. For example, through bike safety classes and the swimming lessons that the school provides, pupils know how to keep themselves safe in other contexts.
- Pupils are very aware of the different forms that bullying can take, including those relating to race and gender. Pupils say that any bullying is extremely rare because, as one pupil said, 'We do not allow bullying at our school.'

- The breakfast club is popular and this ensures that pupils get to school on time. It is very well organised and gives a safe, healthy and sociable start to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Standards of behaviour around the school are good. Pupils are polite and courteous towards adults and each other. They ensure that visitors to the school are made to feel welcome.
- Behaviour in the classroom is good. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and apply themselves enthusiastically to activities. Only when the pace of learning slows do a few pupils lose concentration.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions. Pupils sit and chat together and welcome the opportunity to socialise with their friends. Pupils act responsibly when playing ball games in the playground, where they are well supervised.
- Pupils' attendance is above that of other pupils nationally. However, leaders are aware that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils and are working with families to increase their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of current pupils in the school is speeding up. This is because of stronger leadership and improved teaching. However, outcomes require improvement because work in pupils' books show that there is not yet consistently strong progress, considering their different starting points.
- In the 2017 test results, Year 6 pupils made similar progress to other pupils nationally in reading. Results in the national Year 1 phonics screening check remained above average. However, progress in writing was below average and it was well below average in mathematics. Some pupils did not reach the standards of which they were capable at the end of Year 2. These results were because pupils have experienced periods of underachievement in the past in both key stage 1 and key stage 2. The proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics was below the national figures.
- Last year, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than other pupils with the same starting points. Their progress this year is improving and differences in attainment compared with other pupils are diminishing in most year groups currently in school.
- The large majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make secure progress, because tasks are adapted to meet their particular needs and they receive good support in class, individually and in groups.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are increasingly demonstrating higher level skills of critical analysis and evaluation in English and mathematics. This is because teaching engages them in suitably demanding tasks.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills are developed well in other subjects. In history, pupils learn about the cultures and important events in a wide range of countries and

historical events. The study of famous musicians and artists inspires pupils to appreciate different types of art and music, develop skills in these subjects and produce their own compositions.

Early years provision

Good

- A majority of children join the school with skills and knowledge that are typically expected for their age. Children settle quickly and make great strides with their learning. Consequently, a large majority of children achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception Year. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders make effective use of the extra funding for disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures that they remove barriers to children's learning, for example to enhance children's speech and language development if they fall behind in their learning.
- There are effective links with parents and pre-schools. As a result, children settle quickly into Reception and grow in confidence and independence. Adults have high expectations of children, including of their behaviour. The environment provided in early years nurtures children's confidence and so they behave well and learn to share when playing together.
- The early years provision is well led and managed, with all adults working closely together. Parents are kept informed about how well their children are doing. Parents spoken with, who have children attending the Reception classes, were very appreciative of the staff and how they help their children to progress both in their learning and socially. One parent expressed the views of many when they said: 'My little boy races to school every day and comes out so happy and full of excitement about the day he has had.'
- Staff reinforce important skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics frequently throughout each day. Children make rapid gains in working with number and solving basic problems. They are able to use balance scales to weigh out 10g of sweets, and then combine weights to measure 25g of sweets, showing confidence in how to balance scales. The development of children's reading skills, particularly their use of phonics, is given high levels of attention. For example, adults encourage children to use the letter sounds to recognise rhyming words and find the word that does not rhyme with other words.
- Children work and play in a safe, secure environment. Arrival and departure times are closely supervised by the staff, and the outdoor area is secure and well maintained. The ratio of adults to children is good, and the health and safety of children are ensured through the thoughtful care and attention of staff.

School details

Unique reference number	125681
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10037161

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Kay Dyer
Headteacher	Jo Howell
Telephone number	01789 205811
Website	www.willows.warwickshire.sch.uk
Email address	admin@willowsprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years provision is full time in Reception.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. An average proportion of pupils are in receipt of an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The school's deprivation indicator is below average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There is little mobility within the school. Very few pupils join 'in year'. Most pupils stay

at the school throughout their primary years.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in lessons. These included joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they brought their children to school and examined their responses to the online free-text survey for parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff that completed the online questionnaires.
- Inspectors took account of the 70 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, governors, and a representative from the local authority and school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; and records relating to the behaviour, attendance and safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Pamela Matty	Ofsted Inspector
Johanne Clifton	Ofsted Inspector

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