

Willowbrook Primary School

Rosen Crescent, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex CM13 2TU

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and managers have high expectations of pupils and teachers. Their actions have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and improving.
- Leaders' support for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Adults know pupils well and ensure that levels of care are very high.
- Children in the early years make strong and sustained progress in their learning. Their personal, social and emotional development is supported extremely well.
- The curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development effectively. Pupils are equipped with knowledge, skills and understanding that prepare them for the next stage of their education and for life in modern British society.
- Governors are increasingly effective in their roles. They use their accurate knowledge of the school to challenge and support leaders. Thus, the governing body contributes to securing any improvements that are needed.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school site. They are polite, considerate and respectful to one another and adults. Pupils' positive relationships contribute strongly to their willingness and readiness to learn.
- Most current pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders use additional funding efficiently. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND participate fully in activities. Leaders' use of the sport premium ensures that pupils enjoy physical activities and learn about healthy lifestyles on a regular basis.
- Almost all pupils attend regularly. However, despite leaders' efforts, a small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND have low levels of attendance.
- Teachers do not consistently identify what skills and knowledge pupils need to develop next in subjects other than English and mathematics. This limits pupils' progress.
- Teachers usually plan learning activities that are well matched to pupils' capabilities. Occasionally, activities in reading and writing do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.
- Pupils currently in key stage 2 are making good and improving progress in reading and writing. However, in the past, pupils, particularly the most able, have not always made the progress that they should have in these subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently plan appropriately challenging activities for the most able pupils in reading and writing
 - use assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics to identify precisely the next steps in pupils' learning to strengthen progress further.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - increasing further pupils' achievement in reading and writing, particularly for the most able pupils, so that more pupils attain the higher standards in these subjects by the end of key stage 2.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving further the attendance of the few disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND who are absent too often, so that their attendance is at least in line with the national average for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have established a culture of high expectations in all aspects of the school's work. This ensures that positive relationships and a belief that all can succeed contribute strongly to pupils' willingness to learn. Similarly, teachers ensure that their classrooms are caring, nurturing environments that contribute strongly to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Teachers respond well to leaders' high expectations. Teachers reflect on their teaching methods and think about what works best. Leaders ensure that staff have opportunities for training that support whole-school priorities for improvement and individuals' development needs. Staff are very appreciative of these opportunities. However, leaders have not shied away from taking the action necessary when teachers have not risen to the challenge to improve. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school is securely good and supports most pupils in making strong progress.
- Senior leaders have an accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to ensure that their actions are making a difference and identify any new areas for improvement. For example, leaders identified the reasons for a dip in pupils' achievement in writing in Year 6 in 2018. Leaders changed the whole-school approach to teaching writing as a result. Inspection evidence shows that this is having a positive impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing and pupils are making good progress.
- Subject leaders have a thorough understanding of their areas of responsibility and have clearly identified priorities for improvement. They check regularly on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and have focused, credible plans in place to improve further pupils' experience and learning. Subject leaders contribute effectively to whole-school improvement and work in harmony with senior leaders to check that their actions are making a difference to pupils' achievement.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. This support includes development opportunities for senior leaders and subject leaders, and training and advice for governors. This has strengthened leadership at all levels in the school, so that leaders can sustain improvement without additional outside support. Leaders make good use of opportunities provided by the local authority and the Brentwood Collaborative Partnership to share ideas about effective teaching and to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Leaders have established a curriculum that provides a broad range of experiences that build upon pupils' interests to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects of the national curriculum. Leaders ensure that the curriculum requires pupils to practise and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects. A very wide range of clubs, trips and visiting speakers enriches pupils' learning experience.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for. Pupils learn about other cultures and beliefs in religious education and

throughout the curriculum. This was seen, for example, in artwork linked to pupils' learning about the Ashanti people and life in Ghana and Benin. Pupils learn about making healthy and safe choices and reflect on the effect that their actions can have on others in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, physical education (PE) and assemblies. This results in pupils being well prepared as citizens in modern Britain.

- The sport premium is used to very good effect. Leaders use funding to provide resources and training for staff, so that they can teach a wide range of sports and activities confidently. Leaders also provide a wide range of clubs and activities before, during and after the school day. As a result, almost all pupils have participated in an extra-curricular activity and school teams have been successful in sports competitions.
- Leaders make sure that the needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Leaders put in place additional support that helps most pupils to make good progress, both socially and academically. However, a small number of pupils with SEND are absent too frequently.
- Leaders accurately identify disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning and make sure that teachers know what these are. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and put in place help so that disadvantaged pupils can take part in the full range of learning and extra-curricular activities offered. Most disadvantaged pupils make progress that is as strong as that of other pupils with similar starting points. However, more work is needed to improve the attendance of a small core of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have identified from their checks on learning that, occasionally, activities in reading and writing do not challenge the most able pupils to show what they can achieve. This is particularly true in key stage 2.
- Leaders have developed assessment processes in English and mathematics that are well understood by teachers and pupils. This is not yet the case in other subjects. Therefore, some teachers are less confident in identifying the next steps needed for pupils to deepen their learning and understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governors responded well to support and challenge following a local authority review of the school's work. Governors reviewed their skills and completed training needed to help them fill gaps in their knowledge. New governors were recruited to ensure that they added to the expertise and experience of the governing body. As a result, the governing body is now an effective group with a comprehensive understanding of the school.
- Governors check diligently on the work of leaders and the quality of education provided. They ensure that additional funding is used appropriately and that it is making a difference to pupils' learning, achievement and experience of school. Governors check carefully on the progress that is being made towards achieving priorities for improvement. They provide appropriate, well-judged challenge and support to school leaders to help achieve their common aims.

- Governors have a clear understanding of the duties that they are required to carry out. They ensure that school policies and procedures are revised within agreed timescales and that they reflect the most recent guidance and legal requirements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping pupils safe from harm is at the forefront of leaders' and teachers' work. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. This was echoed by all staff and almost all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire.
- Pupils explained that the school is a caring, friendly environment. They learn how to stay safe in a variety of situations through PSHE lessons and assemblies from visiting speakers. Pupils gave examples of how, in computing lessons, they learn what to do to stay safe when working online. They showed an excellent understanding of e-safety.
- Leaders' checks that adults are suitable to work in school are thorough. The record of these checks is accurately maintained and regularly checked by governors and the headteacher. Governors are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm. Governors undertake safeguarding training and discuss safeguarding at every governing body meeting. Leaders and governors ensure that child protection and safeguarding policies are updated annually and reflect the latest published guidance and legal requirements.
- Leaders ensure that staff have annual training and regular updates so that they can recognise the signs and risks of harm. This includes risks of extremism and radicalisation. As a result, adults are confident in referring any concerns that they have to the senior leaders who make up the safeguarding team. They know that their concerns will be acted upon.
- The headteacher maintains accurate records of concerns and the actions taken by the school, including when advice and help has been sought from external agencies. She makes any referrals to outside agencies promptly, so that pupils and their families receive the help that they need as soon as possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching over time is effective. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are well supported in developing their teaching practice. As a result, most pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils respond to these expectations admirably. They follow established routines with very little prompting from teachers. Pupils are willing to 'have a go' when faced with challenging learning, and work effectively with both adults and other pupils. Pupils develop as confident learners. As a result, classrooms are pleasant, organised and orderly environments that fully support learning.
- Teachers routinely plan sequences of learning and activities that are suitably matched to pupils' capabilities. This is particularly true for those pupils who are working at or below the standard expected for their age. The most able pupils are usually provided with appropriately challenging activities. Pupils enjoy their learning and almost always

complete work to the best of their ability, making strong progress as a result.

- Teachers and teaching assistants have a detailed knowledge of individual pupils. They accurately identify pupils' barriers to learning and work effectively in partnership to help overcome them. Teaching assistants complement the work of teachers to support pupils who they work with to make gains in their knowledge, understanding and independence. This means that most pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils typically make good progress from their different starting points.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils practise and develop their understanding in different contexts. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and use the basic skills of calculation and multiplication facts. This helps pupils to gain confidence in their use of mathematics. Pupils put their mathematics knowledge and skills to good use in science and geography.
- Pupils learn to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Leaders have rightly focused on the importance of ensuring that pupils can use a range of rich vocabulary to enhance the quality of their writing and its impact on the reader. Pupils are taught the technical aspects of grammar, punctuation and spelling well. Teachers make sure that pupils have opportunities to use and practise their writing skills in subjects other than English; the standard of pupils' writing usually matches that in their English books. Occasionally, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with the opportunity to demonstrate what they can achieve in their writing.
- Teachers help pupils to develop enjoyment of reading for pleasure. Pupils who read to inspectors did so fluently and with comprehension appropriate to their current levels of attainment. Pupils have a good understanding of phonics and apply what they have learned when faced with unfamiliar words and to help with spelling. Adults teach phonic skills effectively.
- Leaders identified that pupils were not achieving as well as they should in reading by the end of key stage 2 because they were not developing skills of inference and deduction sufficiently. Teachers now focus clearly on supporting pupils to develop these skills. As a result, pupils' progress has improved, and current pupils are making good progress in reading. Occasionally, teachers do not plan activities that stretch the most able pupils in developing and applying their inference skills.
- Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of a range of subjects. This is often done through themes that capture and build upon pupils' interest. Subject leaders make sure that the content and challenge are at the right level for pupils' age and ability. However, some teachers do not consistently identify what pupils need to do to deepen their understanding or develop subject skills further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have established a truly caring and nurturing culture in the school. Pupils spoke about how the school is a friendly and supportive community. Many of the

positive comments on Parent View reflect the caring nature of the school. One comment, that reflected many others, was: 'I feel very reassured that my child is being well looked after and is learning in a safe environment. Most important of all, my child really enjoys going to school.'

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of why they should learn about and respect others' beliefs and cultures. In their PSHE lessons, pupils discuss topics such as health and well-being in ways that are appropriate for their age. In lessons, they are encouraged to share their views and opinions and are very confident to do so. This is because pupils learn the importance of respecting others and reflecting on both their own and others' opinions.
- Teachers have an in-depth understanding of the pupils and their needs. Pupils are confident that they can talk about any problems or concerns that they have and that they will receive any help that they need quickly. Leaders provide help for pupils through learning mentors and key adults, and they make use of external support when necessary. They ensure that any help is specific to individual pupils' needs. Several parents gave examples of how teachers and leaders have gone beyond what parents expected to support them and their children in times of difficulty.
- Pupils learn about and participate in the democratic process through electing members of the school council. Pupils say the school council provides a way to share their views with school leaders as well as participate in community events. Pupils experience positions of responsibility by acting as council representatives and play leaders.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs, trips and visitors allows pupils to pursue their personal interests. There are many, well-attended sporting activities, and school teams have been successful in competitions. Pupils learn about the importance of physical activity and healthy lifestyles and all participate in a Zumba class during the school week.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of what bullying is and the harm it causes. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare, and this is confirmed by the school's records. They are confident that teachers deal with any situations that arise quickly and effectively. Staff and almost all parents agree that this is the case.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. As a result, learning progresses smoothly and little time is lost when pupils move from one activity to another.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and in less-structured times, such as breaktime and lunchtime, is excellent. They play and socialise together sensibly. Pupils are polite and considerate to one another and to adults.
- Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff model how they expect pupils to behave and speak to one another very well. Adults reward positive behaviour and help pupils to reflect on their actions when they make the wrong choices. Pupils who find it hard to make the right behaviour choices are supported well and their behaviour improves.

- Overall attendance in the school is above the national average. Almost all pupils value their education and attend school regularly and on time. Leaders monitor attendance and punctuality closely and follow up concerns rigorously. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is not as high as for other pupils in the school. This is because a small number of pupils are absent too frequently. Leaders' actions have improved the attendance of most of these pupils, but some pupils are not yet attending as regularly as others in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to effective teaching over time that is usually well matched to pupils' capabilities, most pupils currently in the school, including the most able pupils, are making good progress in a range of subjects.
- In 2018, improved achievement in reading and mathematics meant that more pupils attained the standard expected at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2018, pupils' progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 declined and was below the national average for all pupils. Leaders' swift, yet carefully considered, action is leading to improved and strong progress in writing for most current pupils, including in key stage 2. Pupils use and apply their writing skills confidently in English and other subjects.
- Pupils currently in the school are making strong and securely improving progress in reading. They enjoy reading and do so with confidence and appropriate levels of understanding. Teachers make sure that texts are matched to pupils' current attainment in reading, so that pupils do not find them too hard or too easy.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 is typically in line with the national average.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Pupils use and apply their phonic skills correctly to read unfamiliar words and help with spelling.
- Most pupils with SEND make good progress, often from low starting points, because of teachers' accurate identification of barriers to learning and appropriately targeted support.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school typically make progress that is as strong as that of other pupils with similar starting points. Progress is less consistent for a small number of disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent.
- Pupils demonstrate good understanding, knowledge and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. They make strong progress in a range of subjects, including science, history and geography. Teachers do not use assessment consistently to identify what pupils need to do to deepen further their knowledge and understanding. This is why pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is not better than good.
- Since the previous inspection, the most able pupils have not always made the progress that they should have by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and writing. Activities that are very often well matched to pupils' abilities help current pupils to make good progress in these subjects. However, occasionally, teachers do not provide

enough challenge for the most able pupils in reading or writing activities, which limits what they can achieve.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The deputy headteacher provides excellent leadership for the early years provision. Her high expectations and aspirations for children are shared by all those who work in the Reception class. This is evident in the high quality of education that is provided for children.
- The adults working in the Reception class are knowledgeable and appropriately trained. They use their knowledge to plan a range of purposeful learning activities that support all aspects of children's development. Adults ensure that activities are adapted to match children's different capabilities and allow them to show creativity and develop independence.
- Children join the school with skills in language and communication that are often lower than those typical for their age. Because of highly effective teaching, learning and assessment, they make outstanding progress. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development is typically at or above the national average. Children with SEND and disadvantaged children also make strong and sustained progress because adults know their individual barriers to learning and adapt teaching accordingly.
- The teaching of early reading is very effective. Children are encouraged to link their knowledge of sounds and letters to their writing. Parents welcome the workshops that are provided to help them support learning of these skills at home.
- Children's understanding of number and shape is supported through focused sessions. Adults make the most of opportunities to develop mathematical knowledge through activities that build upon children's own interests. Children also practise and use their understanding of number in their play. For example, an inspector saw children using cones and a number line in the outside area to keep score in a game.
- Adults support children's personal, social and emotional development extremely well. They model how they expect children to speak to one another and how to treat others with kindness and respect. As a result, children quickly form strong relationships with one another and with adults. Children's behaviour is exemplary.
- Very effective arrangements for transition ensure that children settle quickly and make an excellent start when they join the Reception class. There are strong links with pre-school providers and children receive visits at home from school staff prior to joining the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding children are effective. Leaders and governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	115041
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10045943

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Hunt
Headteacher	Clare Branton
Telephone number	01277 214662
Website	www.willowbrook.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@willowbrook.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2014

Information about this school

- Willowbrook Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. The proportions of pupils with SEND and those who have an education, health and care plan are above average.
- The local authority has provided support and challenge to the school and the governing body through a school effectiveness adviser. Leaders, governors and teachers have also used training and development opportunities provided by the local authority to support leadership development and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The school also works with other local schools as part of the Brentwood Collaborative Partnership.
- The school has achieved an Eco-Schools Award and Advanced Healthy Schools status.

- The headteacher took up her post just prior to the previous inspection. There have been a significant number of changes in staffing and responsibilities since the previous inspection.
- The school shares its site with Hutton Pre-school and The Wind in the Willows Nursery. These settings are not managed by the school and are inspected and reported on separately.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to classes to observe learning in all year groups. Some of these visits were made with the headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work, listened to a group of pupils read, observed phonics and intervention sessions and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a group of staff. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of school documents and policies, behaviour and attendance information, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, met with a group of pupils and spoke with pupils when observing them at informal times, such as breaktime and lunchtime, to gather their views on the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors considered responses to a survey of 11 pupils that had been conducted by a governor during a recent visit to the school.
- Inspectors considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, and the 49 free-text comments submitted by parents. Inspectors also spoke to parents before school and considered a letter sent to the inspection team by a parent.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Pardy

Ofsted Inspector

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