

Inspection of a good school: Willow Bank Infant School

Duffield Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 4RW

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

Outcome

Willow Bank Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enthusiastic learners. They are proud of their work and confidently talk about what they know and remember. Teachers make sure lessons are interesting. They arrange trips and visitors to school to help bring learning to life so that pupils remember more. The 'gem powers' with their associated values of 'kindness, responsibility, independence, perseverance and brave learning' guide everything that happens in school.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils and they expect them to work hard and achieve well. Adults model how they want pupils to behave. Pupils respond to this by working hard and being kind and responsible young citizens. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary and any low-level disruption is quickly addressed so that no learning time is lost.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. There is very little unkind behaviour or name-calling. When this does happen, it rarely, if ever, develops into bullying. This is because adults are vigilant. Leaders make sure that pupils learn about different faiths. They celebrate a wide range of different cultures. Pupils learn about equality, diversity and respect through the school curriculum. This content is sensitively taught and provides lots of opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and ask important questions.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including governors, and all staff are ambitious for pupils and united in their commitment to the school.

The teaching of reading is effective. It begins as soon as pupils join the school. Children's keen interest in books and stories is fostered during the early stages. In all year groups, pupils have many opportunities to read regularly and widely. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and skills to ensure that most pupils quickly become fluent readers. Those who do not are well supported by capable adults.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class. Staff have high expectations of children and have planned an ambitious curriculum. Staff model early language and communication skills well. Talk and vocabulary development is at the heart of everything they do. Over their time in school, pupils become confident learners. For example, in mathematics, pupils increasingly practise the school's value of 'brave learning', which includes making mistakes. As pupils in Year 1 simply stated, 'mistakes ... that's how you learn'.

In most subjects, leaders have clearly outlined what pupils need to know, and be able to do, as they progress through the school. Pupils' learning of this important content builds appropriately over time. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned. They help pupils to remember more by recapping on previous learning. Teachers help pupils to develop their understanding of increasingly complex knowledge in most subjects.

However, in design and technology, physical education (PE) and music, leaders have not yet set out how pupils' learning should develop over time. This means that teachers do not know which knowledge or concepts are the most important. Therefore, some activities are not having the desired impact. Leaders know that knowledge and skills need to be more carefully planned. Some of this work is already underway.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders monitor pupils with SEND carefully and use this information to adapt their provision appropriately so that they can learn alongside their classmates.

Leaders provide thoughtful support for pupils who struggle emotionally. They teach strategies that promote pupils' mental and physical health. Pupils know about ways to stay safe online.

Beyond the classroom, pupils are invited to attend extra-curricular clubs, including yoga, football and multi-sports. They develop a sense of responsibility for their world through activities such as crisp packet recycling and the making of eco-bricks. Pupils enjoy joining the local community to celebrate events such as the Platinum Jubilee and the Douglas Bader Remembrance day.

Leaders, including governors, build strong, supportive relationships with those in the school community. They take the well-being and professional development of their staff seriously. Staff work hard because they care deeply for the pupils and feel valued by leaders. Parents recognise and praise staff at all levels for the care they provide. Despite the challenges of the pandemic and its continued impacts, all staff remain united by their passion to provide the best opportunities for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders always prioritise pupils' well-being and safety. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff work hard to build strong relationships

with families. This begins before children start school. Leaders work closely with families if they have concerns about particular pupils. They also work closely with external agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need. Staff are kept up to date with appropriate and necessary training. They demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and they are alert to any signs that pupils might be at risk of harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few of the foundation subjects, the school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well sequenced from early years to Year 2. This means that teachers do not know which knowledge or concepts are the most important. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of reviewing these subjects and changes have already begun. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 109889 |
| Local authority | Wokingham |
| Inspection number | 10207114 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 178 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Rebecca Stewardson |
| Headteacher | Michelle Masters |
| Website | www.willowbankinfant.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 25 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND at the school is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff at the school. The inspector met with three members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, music and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector looked at other subjects as part of this inspection, including history, PE and design and technology.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils to talk about their work, behaviour and their experiences of school.
- The inspector reviewed a number of documents. She considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector viewed the school's website and policies, met with the leader in charge of safeguarding, spoke with pupils, staff and governors, and checked relevant safeguarding documentation and records.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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