

Inspection of Willow Wood Community Nursery & Primary School

Bradbury Road, Wharton, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 3HN

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy warm and caring relationships at Willow Wood Nursery and Primary School. They show high levels of respect towards each other. Pupils welcome people of different faiths, backgrounds and cultures. Pupils work and play together in harmony.

Leaders quickly resolve any rare incidents of bullying effectively. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to feel safe, happy and well looked after.

Leaders expect pupils to try their best and to meet the school's behaviour expectations. Pupils strive to make their teachers proud and to live up to these expectations. Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. This includes pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils greatly value having their name in the school's kindness book in recognition of acts of kindness to other pupils and to staff.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of clubs, trips and visitors to school. They spoke avidly about the many roles and positions of responsibility that they enjoy at school. They carry out their roles with pride. These include working as road safety officers, eco-warriors and mini-police officers. These activities enable pupils to make a valuable contribution to their school and to the wider community.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked effectively together to create a well-constructed and coherent curriculum journey. It is now much more ambitious, and carefully identifies the most important content that pupils should learn from the beginning of the early years to the end of Year 6. Leaders have also considered when this information is introduced to pupils, so that they are able to build on and apply their growing knowledge in most subjects.

Teachers use assessment information well to spot and address any misconceptions quickly and to shape future teaching effectively.

Overall, pupils achieve increasingly well. In the 2022 assessments and statutory tests, the oldest pupils performed at least as well or better than their peers nationally. Although pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 do not match the stronger picture at the end of key stage 2, current pupils are catching up quickly, and gaps in their learning are being addressed effectively.

Teachers benefit from a wide range of subject-specific training. This enables them to teach most subjects with confidence. In some subjects, the improvements that have been made to the curriculum are recent. This means that there is more work to do to ensure that staff teach these curriculums consistently well, so that pupils know more and remember more over time in these subjects.

Leaders have implemented an effective early reading curriculum. They ensure that pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they start school. Leaders have made sure that reading is at the forefront of their curriculum.

The youngest children begin to develop a love of reading through the vast array of books and stories that staff share with them. They show very positive attitudes to reading and enjoy spending time in the attractive and cosy reading areas that leaders have created. Staff keep a watchful eye on any pupil who may not be keeping up with the phonics programme. They intervene quickly so that pupils receive effective and timely support. Struggling readers read books which are well matched to their current understanding of phonics. This helps them to gain confidence and to read with increasing fluency.

The oldest pupils value their school library. Many aspire to become 'titanium readers', in recognition of their reading stamina and positive attitudes to reading. Most pupils, by the time they leave Year 6, have developed into proficient readers. They spoke to an inspector about the wide range of high-quality books and texts that they have enjoyed.

Pupils, including the youngest children and those in the specially resourced provision, show highly positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers' instructions and support each other well. Pupils report that their learning is rarely disrupted by others. However, some pupils are repeatedly absent from school. This impedes their progress through the curriculum.

Pupils with SEND and those in the specially resourced provision are very well supported by staff. This is because no time is wasted in quickly and accurately identifying their needs. For the most part, pupils with SEND, including those in the specially resourced provision, enjoy learning the same content alongside their friends. They also play an active role in all aspects of school life.

Leaders have ensured that they provide pupils with a plethora of activities and events to develop their independence and confidence. Pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated a strong understanding of difference such as race, religion and gender. Pupils also spoke about the importance of being healthy. They know about the importance of spending money wisely. Pupils have high aspirations for their future lives. Many spoke with confidence about their career goals.

Governors share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. They make effective checks on many different aspects of school life. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders care about their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have forged strong relationships with a wide range of external partners so that they can quickly provide effective support for pupils and families.

Staff carry out their safeguarding roles diligently. Leaders have ensured that they have a secure knowledge of safeguarding issues. Staff act promptly if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare, using the school's agreed systems and procedures.

Pupils learn about different aspects of safety. Through the curriculum, they find out about using the internet safely as well as being alert to other dangers in the community, such as knife crime and gang culture.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have made recent refinements to the curriculums. This means that these subjects are less well developed than others and not fully embedded. Leaders should ensure that teachers across the school teach these curriculums consistently well and that recent gains in pupils' learning are sustained in the longer term.
- Some pupils are frequently absent from school. This means that they miss valuable learning opportunities. Leaders should implement plans to further improve these pupils' attendance so that they come to school as often as they should.

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.

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

Unique reference number	135256
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10268365
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Diane Clark
Headteacher	Martin Bell
Website	www.willowwoodprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The provision caters for pupils ranging from Year 2 to Year 6 whose primary need is moderate learning difficulties. All pupils who attend the specially resourced provision have an education, health and care plan.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- Leaders provide a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff in school. They spoke with governors, including the chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, physical education and science with the curriculum leaders of these subject areas. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. An inspector listened to pupils read to familiar adults.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders from other areas of the curriculum. They looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils and visited some lessons.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors evaluated leaders' safeguarding arrangements, the self-evaluation document and leaders' improvement plans.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Dymond	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Cooper	Ofsted Inspector

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