

Inspection of a good school: Willow Green Academy

Hampden Close, Ferrybridge, Knottingley, West Yorkshire WF11 8PT

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of academy of this school is Chris Parkinson. This school is part of Delta Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Tarn, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Hodsman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Willow Green. They feel happy and safe and are proud to be part of this inclusive school. Pupils are respectful and polite. The school sets ambitious expectations. Pupils receive support and encouragement to aim high. As a result, all pupils achieve well regardless of their starting point. They are well prepared for their next stage in education.

The ASPIRE ethos stands for 'achieve, safety, pride, independence, responsibility and engagement'. It is a golden thread that runs through every aspect of school life. Pupils refer to it, talking about being responsible for their own safety and actions. They know that they keep themselves safe through the choices they make. The behaviour system supports them to engage and make the right choices.

The exemplary culture of behaviour and citizenship begins from early years. Children show high levels of self-control. They reflect and correct their actions without prompting, for example adjusting their pace to walk sensibly around the setting.

The school and trust community create clear pathways to success for all pupils. They do this through the curriculum and experiences that they offer. As a result, their pupils become lifelong learners. Pupils, staff, parents and carers agree that it is 'great to be Willow Green'.

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

The precise design of the trust curriculum supports pupils in achieving well. As soon as

children start school, key knowledge, such as early number, is a priority. The early years environment offers learning opportunities that are deliberately planned. Children learn by design and not by chance. For example, hand signs support early communication. Planned activities in the woodwork shed allow children to take managed risks and develop the fine motor skills needed for writing. The curriculum grows from early years. It provides all pupils with the key knowledge and skills that they need to be successful. Pupils remember and connect this knowledge across subjects. The sequence of learning is purposeful. For example, line drawing in art helps pupils draw accurate designs in technology. In history, pupils learn about invasions. They learn about Vikings before Romans. This is to challenge pupils' thinking. It shows that an earlier empire was more developed than later invading groups. A reading-enhanced curriculum means that carefully chosen texts introduce academic vocabulary. This vocabulary is used to explain knowledge learned by both teachers and pupils.

Learning to read is a priority, and pupils are highly successful. Phonics begins as soon as children start school in the Reception Year. Any children who need to catch up in early years and beyond have extra daily practice. All staff in school are trained in phonics. Adults who teach it are experts in delivering the programme. They receive weekly training and development to fine tune their practice. Pupils read daily, and those at risk of falling behind catch up quickly. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words. When learning to read, they read books containing the sounds they know. There is a culture of reading in school. Books are everywhere in the environment and not just on display. Teachers read to pupils every day. They have a top 30 fiction and non-fiction recommended reads in each year group. In early years, adults share stories with children in the different areas of learning. This inspires children in ways to use the environment. Pupils choose books from the library. They have a weekly book club session with their teacher to discuss what they are reading.

The school develops pupils beyond academic subjects well. Clubs, trips and visits are well attended by all pupils, including the most disadvantaged. Pupils visit 'Dallowgill', the trust's own residential and environmental centre. Here, the pupils understand light pollution when they experience 'dark skies'. They grow their resilience and independence as they experience new challenges. Pupils are enthusiastic about the roles of responsibility they have in school. They talk about their future ideas for the school council. Pupils' work during an oracy project has improved their public speaking confidence. They know how to discuss ideas and that their opinions are valued. Work with a local construction company involves pupils in their community. It broadens their understanding of careers. The school holds religious education lessons in the local church. Pupils talk knowledgeably about other faiths. They are prepared to become future citizens.

Leaders at all levels work collaboratively to support each other. They refine the curriculum and learn together. This leads to a culture of continuous improvement across the school. Staff feel supported by all leaders. They say that the systems in place reduce workload and help well-being. Training and support provided by the trust help teachers with their teaching practice. There are clear lines of communication from the academy advisory board to the trust board and the CEO. All provide appropriate, effective and constructive support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138401
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10269191
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Hodsman
Head of Academy	Chris Parkinson
Website	www.willowgreen.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a sponsor-led academy and is part of Delta Academies Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with a wide range of staff, including the head of academy, the directors of quality and learning, and subject leaders. The inspector met with

representatives from the academy advisory board, the trust board and the CEO of the multi-academy trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector discussed curriculum plans and looked at work for art and design, design technology and geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records; took account of the views of the designated safeguarding leads, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke to pupils both formally and informally, including single-sex groups of pupils.
- The inspector considered a variety of school documents, including the school evaluation plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff and parents through surveys, including Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Lesley Sullivan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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 children looked after, 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023