

Inspection of an outstanding school: Willow Brook Primary School Academy

190 Church Road, Leyton, London E10 7BH

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2023

Outcome

Willow Brook Primary School Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The head of school is Lucie Dawn. This school is part of the Griffin Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The executive headteacher, Justin Creasey, is responsible for this school and one other. The trust is led by the chief executive officer, Anne Powell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael McCreedy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel fortunate to attend Willow Brook. They are happy and kept safe here. Pupils are all expected to work hard, engage in thoughtful discussion and speak to one another kindly. They rise to these high expectations. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. On the rare occasion there might be disputes, pupils feel listened to and well supported by staff to deal with them. Pupils develop as confident, reflective communicators, and lessons are abuzz with purposeful learning conversations.

Pupils learn an ambitious and rich curriculum that prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. Pupils here thoroughly enjoy reading, both collectively during class story time or privately in the many beautiful reading spaces established around the school. They enjoy a truly inspirational environment that has been carefully constructed to inspire learning and enrich pupils' experiences and aspirations.

Pupils value the vast range of opportunities that are open to them. They benefit from being able to participate in numerous sporting and cultural events with other schools in the trust. They especially enjoy hosting the trust's 'Arts Festival'. They are rightly proud that their school is extremely 'creative' and that it achieves well in English and mathematics.

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

The school has designed and implemented a rich, broad and ambitious curriculum, which extends beyond what is expected nationally. This is made accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Trust and school

leaders have ensured that all areas of the curriculum inspire pupils and reflect the diverse school community.

The curriculum in all subjects, and in the early years, has been carefully constructed and sequenced. This means pupils learn and embed the necessary component knowledge, vocabulary and skills they need to be ready for the next stage in their learning. For example, in music, younger pupils learn about pitch as 'high' and 'low'. This prepares them for when learning about opera to use the terms soprano, alto, tenor and bass when describing the different voice types they hear. Likewise, in geography, children in Reception learn how to distinguish the sea from the land using globes. This foundation knowledge prepares them well when they learn about continents and oceans in later years.

Teachers are very knowledgeable and confident in delivering the curriculum. They introduce and explain new knowledge with precision and accuracy. They regularly recap, assess and address any misconceptions that arise. This helps pupils to develop confidence in tackling more complex ideas or to correct any mistakes they might make.

Pupils with SEND are swiftly identified. Wherever possible, pupils are well supported to access the same curriculum as their peers. This is because staff make suitable adaptations that are well matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve very well.

Early reading has long been a key focus of the school. The agreed phonics programme is delivered with fidelity by highly trained, experienced and expert staff. Regular assessment is used to check pupils' progress. Should pupils fall behind, they are quickly given additional support to catch up. The sharp focus on communication and language in the Nursery means children are well prepared to learn phonics when they start their Reception Year.

Disruption to lessons and learning is extremely rare. This is because pupils are highly engaged in their learning and behave well. They are supported to self-regulate, be kind and listen to one another. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are encouraged to access a broad range of additional activities, including chess, computing and cookery. There are numerous sports and musical activities made available and accessible to all. All year groups visit the local library each term. Pupils enjoy going to museums, galleries and historically and geographically significant places. Activities are strategically planned to supplement and expand on what is being learned in school or to enrich pupils' cultural capital. There is a strong focus on caring for nature and the community, as well as learning about different cultures and faiths.

Staff, pupils, parents and carers are extremely positive about Willow Brook Primary. The trust, the local governing body and school leaders have worked closely with parents, who recognise that communication is a particular strength. Staff report that their workload and opportunities to develop professionally are well considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2017.

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	138364
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10290207
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	630
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael McCreedy
Headteacher	Justin Creasey (executive headteacher) Lucie Dawn (head of school)
Website	http://www.willowbrook-gst.org/
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Griffin Schools Trust.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club managed by the school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. To do this, they met with subject leaders, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- The inspectors met with senior leaders, a selection of subject leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- Inspectors met with members of the trust, including the chief executive officer, and representatives from the local governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, 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 views of pupils, parents, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Una Buckley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alice Clay

Ofsted Inspector

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