

Inspection of The Willows School

Stipularis Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 9QB

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Malcolm Shaw. This school is The Willows School Academy Trust, a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Balevir Grant.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy, friendly and exciting place to be. Many pupils have experienced disruptions to their learning in previous schools. Some pupils have been excluded in the past, and others have had little or no schooling. As a result of the dedication, expertise and kindness of all staff, pupils settle in really well. They build trusting relationships with staff.

Pupils flourish at The Willows. Not only in their academic achievements but also in their personal development. This is because everyone has extremely high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Staff do whatever it takes to ensure pupils develop their knowledge across the curriculum, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils learn to enjoy school again and take pride in their successes.

Staff get to know each pupil exceptionally well. Pupils said that staff know exactly how to help them when things get tricky. This helps pupils to calm down and get back on track with their learning. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are safe and well cared for.

Pupils' learning is enhanced in so many thoughtful and well-planned ways. For example, pupils love the enrichment classes which take place every Friday. These help them to develop their talents and interests in things like gardening, cooking and drumming.

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

It is extremely clear to see why parents and carers are so happy with all aspects of the school's work. They feel part of their children's journeys. Every step of the way, staff demonstrate such a positive and unwavering commitment to ensuring that each pupil excels.

The ambitious and imaginative curriculum allows pupils to build their knowledge securely in all subjects. Staff use their checks on pupils' learning to sort out any gaps in pupils' prior knowledge. Nothing is left to chance. Staff have an in-depth understanding of what each pupil needs and when. Teaching is skilfully adjusted to meet pupils' needs. This allows all pupils to learn and to show what they know. For example, pupils retold the story of 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' in a variety of ways, including drawing, map making, and using toys to represent characters.

Reading is given high priority in every class. Pupils are extremely well supported to read and spell accurately using phonics. They clearly enjoy spending time in the newly extended library. As well as the one-to-one reading sessions, story times captivate pupils' imaginations. For example, as teachers read to pupils in Year 3, pupils were on the edge of their seats at the turn of every page. They gasped and smiled, eager to find out what was to come next. Pupils experience high-quality texts across the curriculum which inspire them to think about wider issues, including diversity. For example, one group reflected on the story 'Wonder' and on the characters' feelings about going to school for the first time. Staff helped pupils to share their ideas, including pupils' personal experiences.

The school's approaches are highly effective in identifying and responding to pupils' and families' needs. Staff meet regularly to discuss pupils' all-round circumstances. They keep a close check on pupils' well-being, attendance and behaviour. Staff feel very well supported by leaders and each other. This contributes to the school's team spirit and open culture.

Pupils understand the school's rules and respond really well to these throughout the day. They love earning and saving their points to spend in the school's special shop. Staff promote pupils' social skills very effectively in lessons and at other times too. For example, lunchtimes are happy occasions where staff and pupils eat and chat together. Daily assemblies are joyous times where pupils sing, perform and have fun.

All pupils get the chance to go on at least two visits each term. These help pupils to apply their learning in different contexts. For example, pupils used their science learning at the botanical gardens and different museums in London. Pupils take on a range of jobs and responsibilities in school. The school councillors, for instance, are extremely proud of their achievements. The fundraising for the school's 'buddy benches' is just one example of their excellent work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	137652
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10290188
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Balevir Grant
Headteacher	Malcolm Shaw
Website	www.thewillowsschoolacademytrust.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is registered to cater for pupils aged three to 11. At the time of this inspection, the school only had pupils in Years 2 to 6 on roll. For this reason, a judgement on early years provision was not made during this inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with a representative of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in other subjects, including music and humanities.

- 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and staff. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the online staff survey. An inspector met with parents at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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