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Mrs Katie Sharp
Head teacher
Willowdown Primary School
Kings Drive
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Dear Mrs Sharp

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of Willowdown Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 18 September 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the director of primary, other staff and trustees the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also visited a sample of lessons, met with pupils and reviewed strategic planning documents. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

Main findings

Since the last inspection you have restructured your leadership team and strengthened leadership capacity. These changes have enabled the school to better focus on securing improvements in the quality of education for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school and trust have sensibly worked together closely. You and your team have taken great strides to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report.

You have made substantial improvements to the curriculum to raise the level of ambition. It now sets out important knowledge and the order in which it should be taught. This means that pupils can build on their prior learning with greater success. You have developed staff expertise to deliver the new, more demanding, content. However, you recognise the continuing importance of further training to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum meets the needs of pupils consistently. There is still a need to ensure that teaching expertise is evenly developed across subjects. Without this, important knowledge is not made explicit enough. In addition, those who have secured learning and are ready to move onto more complex ideas, do not consistently do so. This means they do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has benefited from comprehensive support from the trust. This has enabled the pace of improvements to increase dramatically. The school has been receptive to the useful advice and feedback. Your current plans for improvement make clear the priority areas and actions that you are taking to secure improvements. You have accurately identified parts of the curriculum which require further strengthening, such as pupils' speaking, listening and writing. You are taking appropriate steps to address these. You have introduced clear quality assurance systems to evaluate the emerging impact of the changes you have made. Those responsible for governance hold school leaders to account for the quality of education effectively, but also consider staff welfare

With the support of the trust, you and your team have completely overhauled the behaviour policy. This is now implemented consistently by staff and well understood by pupils. The atmosphere within school is calm and purposeful. This means that pupils can concentrate without distraction. Suspensions have reduced over time. The school has been relentless in its work to improve pupils' attendance. There is still work to do here, but the strategies have had demonstrable impact.

The school has strengthened its relationship with the wider community. Engagement opportunities with parents and carers are focused and have purpose. For example, you work closely with parents of pupils with SEND to review individual pupil support plans in a timely way. Consequently, there has been clear improvements in parental engagement.

You have also engaged well with support provided by subject hubs to improve the quality of education. This is helping to improve the implementation of the curriculum and supporting pupils to learn with greater success.

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I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Futura Learning Partnership the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Liz Geller
His Majesty's Inspector