



# The Willows Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 131882  
**LEA** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 282273  
**Inspection dates** 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Philip Cole CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tayfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Woodhouse Park
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M22 1BQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 437 4444
<b>Number on roll</b>	369	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 436 5947
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr J Corcoran
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss A Whitehead

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school serves a considerably disadvantaged community confronted by many social problems. Almost all the children come from white British backgrounds. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little higher than average. Children starting and leaving the school at times other than normal is greater than usual; many children are vulnerable because of the difficulties faced by their families. Attainment on entry is very low.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money in very challenging circumstances. This judgement is higher than the school's evaluation of its effectiveness which is more modest. Although standards are below average by Year 6, pupils achieve well given their very low starting points. This is also the case in the Foundation Stage. Strong achievement is the result of good quality teaching and learning throughout the school and an excellently enriched curriculum. Within this positive picture girls have achieved particularly well in comparison with boys in the last two years. However, work to enhance boys' progress is already taking effect. Pupils are cared for and supported exceptionally well, which contributes to their outstanding personal development. Parents are rightly very supportive of the school and its achievements.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is an excellent leader. The leadership team, together with all other staff, take pride in what they do. Expectations are very high and self-evaluation is used extremely well. Staff, parents, governors and children are all consulted in the process of making things even better. Overall there has been impressive progress made in building on the positive outcomes from the last inspection; for example, attendance has improved significantly. There is a continuous striving for excellence.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards for all pupils ensuring the progress of boys accelerates to become similar to that made by girls.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' standards in the national assessments in both Year 2 and Year 6 have consistently been below the national average. However, to reach these levels, pupils achieve well overall from a very low starting point on entry to the Nursery. By the end of Reception, whilst most children are still working towards the early learning goals, they have progressed well.

At Year 2 pupils have been improving at a faster rate than in other schools to a point where in 2005, pupils' standards in writing were in line with those nationally. This is exceptional from such a low starting point. Although the school did not quite reach the very challenging Year 6 targets it set itself in 2005, pupils did achieve well in comparison with their previous test levels in Year 2. This was particularly the case for girls who made significantly better progress than girls nationally. Whilst boys made the expected gains from Year 2 to Year 6 in 2005, boys currently in Year 6 show all signs of closing the gap on the girls. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good gains in their learning because their specific needs are recognised and supported very well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding for all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They develop high levels of self respect and respect for others, within a secure, nurturing environment. They know they are valued and listened to. Pupils develop a keen sense of responsibility for themselves, for others and for the environment. They enjoy school, as one pupil said, 'lessons are interesting and we have fun'. Whilst attendance is just below average, it has improved greatly in the last four years and continues to do so. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in and out of the classroom. They work hard and have very positive attitudes to learning. The school is very successful in empowering boys and girls to want to do their best.

Pupils have a keen awareness of healthy lifestyles and positive attitudes to physical education. They make full use of the good opportunities to show initiative through links with the community. For example, designing the park at the front of the school and discussing other community improvements with local councillors. Pupils' spiritual and moral development and their awareness of other cultures are very good. Their social development is outstanding. The school is at the heart of its community and pupils' strong social skills stand them in good stead for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is good, with some features that are stronger. Work focused specifically on the needs of particular groups of pupils ensure that, for example, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve just as well as others because work is matched at the right level for them; specialist work is also linked closely to the work completed in the classrooms. Work focused on boys' achievement is starting to pay dividends such as the use of reading materials that are of particular interest to boys. The support assistants provide high quality support and teach groups very effectively.

Teachers expect pupils to behave well and work hard. Very good relationships are evident. As a result pupils enjoy school and are willing learners. They are confident to answer questions and share opinions. A positive atmosphere for learning is created because teachers value what the pupils have to say. Effective tracking and assessment systems result in the school knowing exactly how well pupils are progressing. The need to focus on boys' achievement was one such result of this effective system.

A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers carefully explain what is to be taught in the lessons. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Occasionally when this slows progress suffers because pupils spend too long listening to the teacher. The outstanding teaching is dynamic, full of pace and challenge and results in boys and

girls making rapid progress as seen when Year 6 pupils were improving their writing skills.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. This is a very inclusive school in which the curriculum is very well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils including the gifted and talented and the vulnerable. Boys' needs are being addressed. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop key learning skills as well as factual knowledge. A wide range of activities are available, such as the accelerated mathematics group and the 'Kiwi Club' which is designed to provide 'fun' trips to expand life experiences. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is stimulated by the rich variety of opportunities that are on offer for them. These include well planned visits and interesting and stimulating visitors to school. Activities outside lessons are outstanding in range and quality. The numerous sporting opportunities as well as the residential visits help to develop the pupils' physical skills. Themed weeks such as the 'Science Week' or 'India Week' very successfully develop skills, understanding and self esteem and are greatly valued by both staff and pupils. Great effort is taken to produce a stimulating environment that both supports learning and celebrates pupils' efforts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This aspect is outstanding. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils feel safe and cared for. Health and safety procedures are currently being refined further following a local authority audit. Arrangements for child protection are secure and all adults understand their responsibilities. There is very strong provision made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support is organised and targeted carefully to meet pupils' individual needs. Increasing use of data gained from assessment is providing rigorous and challenging targets for improvement that are shared and understood by pupils. They have good opportunities to express their views about their progress and what they need to do to improve. Pupils have trusting relationships with the adults who work with them and really enjoy coming to school. They are successfully taught to take care of themselves and to make healthy choices. The school lives up to its mission statement of 'A caring community achieving and celebrating success'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a drive to ensure that the needs of boys and girls are at the heart of everything the school does. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of what she wants to achieve and works tirelessly to ensure others share her vision and are fully involved in achieving it. Leadership is broadly based across the staff, including teaching assistants, who were responsible recently for organising an educational visit for all pupils in the school. Considerable effort is

taken to ensure that everyone has the skills and expertise to take on their responsibilities. Staff and pupils constantly challenge themselves to improve, and all take a real pride in what the school achieves.

The leadership team and others who have responsibilities make very effective use of a wide range of strategies to look at how well the school is performing. This information is used together with the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers and governors to draw up well thought out plans to improve the school. The leadership team and governors keep under close scrutiny the progress made in achieving what has been planned. This approach has ensured effective progress in bringing about improvements since the last inspection. There is a clear desire in the school to strive for excellence.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and polite.

What we most liked about your school:

- we are delighted that you enjoy school so much and are so excellently behaved
- you have lots of interesting and exciting things to do - we were particularly impressed with special events you have, such as 'Science Week' and 'India Week'
- we think the teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors look after you really well
- you work very hard and do well in your lessons and in the tests you take
- your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to help you
- the headteacher, governors and all staff do an excellent job to make this the best school they can
- your parents are right to think that you go to an outstanding school and are very glad that you come here.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you all to do even better in the tests, particularly the boys who have not done quite as well as the girls.

We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at what you were doing and wish you well in the future.