

Willow Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122533
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number	292427
Inspection date	14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Langham
Headteacher	Mr Trevor Ross-Gower
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002
School address	Willow Lane Gedling Nottingham NG4 4BN
Telephone number	0115 9878501
Fax number	0115 9878501

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves the former mining community of Gedling on the outskirts of Nottingham. Almost all of the pupils are of White British backgrounds and almost all come from homes where English is the first language. A third of pupils travel into the school from neighbouring communities. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average although there is a wide range of ability in each class. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above that of most schools.

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. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and is very well set to maintain this momentum. Standards have improved markedly because the quality of teaching and learning gets better and better. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'My son loves school and has excelled at Willow Farm. He is very motivated by the celebration of his success and it has inspired him to greater academic achievement'.

The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development and in their communication skills. This is because the school is very successful in enabling the children to settle quickly into routines. Furthermore, the school places great emphasis on reading, writing and the development of the children's speaking and listening skills. The overall quality of the children's experience provides a secure foundation for their future learning.

Standards and achievement are outstanding. In Year 2, standards are above average and by Year 6 they are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The vibrant curriculum captures the pupils' interest and motivates them. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Because they are very well supported, particularly by a team of dedicated teaching assistants and volunteers, those pupils who find learning difficult make very good progress. The more academic pupils are challenged to reach their potential because they are encouraged to apply their skills to solve problems. This is particularly evident in science where the strong emphasis on scientific enquiry and practical investigations has advanced the pupils' thinking skills. Because the pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, and their attitudes to learning are very positive, the pupils' achievement is outstanding. However, in English, standards in reading are stronger than in writing, especially in the junior classes, in spite of the school's recent initiatives to remedy the situation.

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is exemplary. The children really enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are above average and improving. Staff respect and value the pupils and consequently pupils develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline; their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they respond very well to the many initiatives encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They work hard and play well together, forming excellent relationships with one another and with adults in school. The school could do more, however, to help prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Teamwork is at the heart of all of the school's successes. The headteacher has nurtured the ethos of high achievement and has motivated and empowered his colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. The school leadership has systematically developed the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now outstanding. The children are very well cared for throughout the day and their academic guidance is excellent. The school's view of itself, although rather modest, has identified appropriate areas for further improvement. The school has the respect of the community that it serves and works very well with other schools. Willow Farm provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of writing in the junior classes.

- Place greater emphasis on the celebration of the cultural diversity in modern British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and reach standards that are above average. The pupils build successfully on this secure foundation and progress very well throughout the school ensuring that overall achievement is outstanding. Because the teachers make effective use of assessment data when planning lessons, standards are rising sharply and pupils are making rapid progress. This is reflected in the improved performance of the pupils in the national assessment tests for Years 2 and 6 in recent years. The school was in the top ten per cent nationally in terms of performance at the end of Key Stage 2 in both 2005 and 2006. In science, pupils benefit from the exciting investigative approach to learning and an increasing proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels. Although standards in mathematics and English are well above average, achievement has not been as consistent in writing. The pupils excel in creative writing, using a wide range of vocabulary, but are less accomplished in their formal accounts. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen because of enhanced resourcing and training for staff. Standards in sport are above average and strongly support the pupils' personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They benefit from a climate in school that enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to take responsibility. This is particularly evident in the improvements to the school environment that stem from school council decisions. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and they enjoy trusting relationships with the adults in school. They are confident learners and work very well together. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance levels are good. The participation on an excellent range of out-of-school activities is high. A strong personal, social and health education programme, combined with initiatives such as the Healthy Schools' Gold Award, enable pupils to develop a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles.

The pupils contribute very well to the wider community and successfully acquire the essential skills that equip them for the next stages of education and adult life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in the spiritual, moral and social aspects. The cultural development of the pupils is well promoted through art and music. The pupils are aware of other religions through their work in the humanities. They have a strong sense of their own cultural traditions and a growing awareness of cultural diversity, but more could be done to prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic progress, and this promotes very good achievement by the end of Year 6. A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that motivate the pupils to do their best. Interactive whiteboards are used very successfully to demonstrate new techniques and the teachers ensure that the pace of learning is good. Teachers and classroom

assistants work very effectively together to provide pupils with a high level of support to develop their independent learning skills. Because the work set is designed to encourage the pupils to think and is closely matched to the range of ability in each class, learning is fun and the pupils make very good progress. The teachers provide excellent feedback to pupils to make sure that they learn from their mistakes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and strongly supports the children's personal, academic and physical development. It is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to interest and excite the pupils. A good range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum, and an excellent range of out of school activities encourages pupils to develop their skills, particularly in music and sport. For example, the pupils develop their skills through a wide range of physical activities such as football, tag rugby, cricket and athletics. The curriculum creatively links learning across subjects and strongly supports the development of spoken language and expressive writing. The outstanding programme of personal and social education is reflected in the pupils' high standards of cooperation and behaviour. The specific needs of pupils are addressed very well, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are given many opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care and guidance is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each child as an individual. The adults provide excellent role-models and consequently the school is a happy and inviting place in which to work and learn. Parents speak warmly about the care that is taken to ensure that their children settle quickly into school routines and how well their children are prepared for the next stage of their education. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and understood by all staff. Pupils are confident in the knowledge that adults will help them with any problems should they occur. Pupils of all abilities are very well supported academically because procedures for checking and tracking their progress have been systematically refined and are used shrewdly. The school has an excellent system for setting and reviewing personal targets which gives pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Home/school partnerships have been developed effectively to support the pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher leads from the front and has been resolute in his drive for excellence. He has nurtured a strong team spirit and the staff have been empowered by a culture of continuing professional development. They are taking an increasingly effective role in monitoring standards and improving pupil performance. Furthermore, the development of the quality of teaching and the use of assessment procedures to ensure that the work set enables all groups of pupils to achieve their best, have been key components of the school's successes since the last inspection. Consequently, the pupils are highly motivated and standards have risen to well above average. There has been outstanding progress in recent years; every aspect of school life has shown improvement. The

leadership team have accurately identified those few areas that require further refinement and continue to strive for further improvement. The governing body is fully involved in strategic development and has become confident in its ability to hold the school to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willow Farm Primary School, Nottingham, NG4 4BN

I really enjoyed my visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. I was very pleased to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your morning assemblies, listen to your singing and meet the school council. I can understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them.

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- Everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is wonderful.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- All of your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides an excellent range of activities and visits to keep you interested.
- You are very successful at sport and clearly know how to stay fit and healthy.
- Mr Ross-Gower is an excellent headteacher.

You are very, very fortunate to be able to attend Willow Farm School. Very few schools are as good as yours. This is because Mr Ross-Gower and the staff really understand how to make learning fun and work very hard to help you. It is really important that you remember to thank them and continue to work hard. I know that you achieve well but, I am asking your teachers to help you do even better with your writing, especially in the junior classes. The school should also do more work to help you appreciate the richness of our society. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead Inspector