

# The Willows Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131882
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	328653
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Flitcroft

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	407
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Vicky Withnall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss A Whitehead
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Tayfield Road Woodhouse Park Manchester Lancashire M22 1BQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 437 4444
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 436 5947

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. Entitlement to free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The vast majority of pupils speak English as their first language, with a few at an early stage of learning English.

The school's Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes and a Nursery which some children attend part time. The school has gained the Bronze Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Gold Award and the International Schools Award. It is also a national support school.

## 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 which truly lives out its motto, 'A caring community, achieving and celebrating success'. It has continued to strive for excellence since the last inspection. It has made good headway in this and is exceedingly well placed to improve further.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are excellent ambassadors for the school and are well motivated to take part in all the activities on offer. They have an excellent understanding of cultural differences because the school celebrates the diversity of its pupils' backgrounds. They show an extremely strong awareness of the needs of others and of wider world issues.

Children start school with skills and abilities that are very low compared to most children this age. They achieve very well at each key stage so that when they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress overall. This is because staff pay meticulous attention, through the use of rigorous assessment and tracking systems, to the progress each pupil makes. They constantly review each pupil's progress and address any identified gaps in learning with programmes of work set to meet the needs of individuals.

The quality of teaching and learning is extremely good with outstanding features. Because lessons are lively and behaviour is exceptionally well managed, pupils learn at a rapid pace. They thoroughly enjoy their learning. Highly skilled support assistants enable those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make the same progress as their class mates.

The outstanding curriculum encourages pupils to be imaginative in their work and gives them maximum opportunity to reach their challenging targets. They benefit from a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. These do much to raise pupils' confidence and add significantly to their general well-being. The school's outstanding contribution to community cohesion is central to pupils' learning. Staff and pupils have established a wide range of partnerships both locally, for example with Manchester Airport, and internationally through their links with a school in South Africa.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Making sure that every pupil is nurtured in the excellent caring and supportive environment is a priority for the school. Support is at a high level for all pupils and, in particular, for those vulnerable in terms of their emotional needs.

School leaders and managers including governors work together extremely effectively to continually improve not just the school but also the local community. The impact on the pupils' personal development and the care and welfare provided is most notable.

The school forges excellent partnerships with others to promote the well-being of learners as reflected in the acquisition of the International Schools Award.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children start school with skills and capabilities that are very low compared to those typically expected for their age. Their language and their personal, social and emotional skills are particularly weak. Children achieve well although by the end of the Reception year their attainment is below expected levels for their

age, and skills in communication and language are weak. The good, and at times outstanding, quality of teaching enables pupils to learn at a good rate. Children develop confidence as they build their social skills so that they increasingly work and play cooperatively. The quality of welfare provided for children is outstanding. From this stems positive relationships and personalised support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. This aids children's progress, happiness and well-being. Good leadership and management ensure that very effective use is made of information from assessment to match tasks to pupils' needs. Planning in the indoor environments caters well for pupils' needs. Children have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills in the classroom. However, they have less opportunities to develop their skills outdoors because Reception children have limited access to the outdoor learning area. The school is at an early stage in redressing the balance so that all benefit from exploring and learning outdoors.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the good range and quality of learning opportunities provided indoors for Reception class children is matched by those provided outdoors.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

From their starting points pupils achieve very well in Key Stage 1, although standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average by the end of Year 2. Pupil tracking information shows a consistent trend of improvement over time. In Years 3 to 6, this excellent achievement is maintained and a significant proportion attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, as demonstrated in the school's data and inspection findings. Challenging targets for improvement are achieved regularly and sometimes exceeded. Overall, this represents outstanding achievement over time for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. All pupils are supported very well in their learning and respond positively to the excellent teaching and high quality assistance which supports the sustained improvement over time.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show great enjoyment and enthusiasm in all they do; they form excellent relationships and the majority behave in an exemplary manner. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community through taking on many extra responsibilities and the respect they show for others. For example, they eagerly participate in the running of the school shop and the purchasing of provisions for the breakfast club. This enjoyment of school is reflected in a certain sense of pride in their responsibilities. Much hard work has been done with families and this continues to raise attendance to broadly average levels. Pupils say they feel safe and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. They are very aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and to keep safe as seen in the achievement of external awards related to health.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils learn quickly because the overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Interesting work and the infectious enthusiasm of the staff motivates pupils to learn; in the most effective lessons, work is finely tailored to the varying abilities of the pupils. This, however, is not always the case and in a very small number of lessons the level of challenge is not always as sharply focused. Staff use technology confidently, classroom management is frequently outstanding and planning is detailed. Particularly strong features of teaching include the pace at which the majority of lessons are delivered and the frequent use of information on wall displays to alert pupils to the next steps in learning and encourage them to greater efforts. Teaching assistants provide very good support and increase levels of confidence for small groups and individuals.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

An outstanding curriculum meets pupils' needs and helps them to enjoy their learning. Staff integrate subjects well and this supports pupils' developing skills in literacy and numeracy very effectively. Visits and visitors contribute to an excellent range of additional activities. These enrich the curriculum to make learning interesting and meaningful. Very wide opportunities for sport, learning Spanish, music, the arts and a variety of visits and clubs, create an excellent breadth of curriculum. A strong community dimension includes many activities which involve pupils and adults in the local area and adds much to the pupils' understanding of how members of a community can work together for great benefits to all.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding quality of pastoral care has a significant impact on pupils all round development and personal achievements. It is based on exceedingly positive relationships. Parents and carers are very welcome in school and strongly encouraged through meetings and events such as 'Stay and play' in the Early Years Foundation Stage to be more involved in the education of their children. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Any bullying and racism are extremely rare and pupils have absolute confidence that if it were to occur it would be quickly resolved. Outstanding support for vulnerable pupils, drawing well on links with outside agencies, ensures pupils get the most from what the school has to offer. For example, group activities give some pupils a much needed boost to their self-esteem. Much work has been done with families and this continues to raise attendance to broadly average levels. Feedback through marking and targets to guide pupils' learning is used very effectively to ensure pupils know how to take the next step in their learning. The school has highly effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress. This information is used well to identify pupils who may be falling behind, and to provide extra support.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. A strong and dynamic team approach develops provision very well. Senior leaders provide clear direction and a strong commitment to ensuring the school is constantly improving. Middle leaders and other staff follow this lead and continually strive to raise standards. They treat all pupils with dignity and respect and enable the vast majority to attain their potential. The school has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and areas for development and is never complacent. Outstanding partnerships with local schools and within the community means ideas and expertise are shared for the benefit of pupils. The school takes its community responsibilities seriously and promotes pupils' understanding of their place locally and in the wider world. For example, it trains many local people for roles within school and is a true hub of the community it serves. The school extends pupils' awareness of international aspects so that pupils gain a very well-founded understanding of the diversity of people and cultures farther afield. Governance is outstanding, at the heart of all that the school does and provides excellent challenge and support. The school provides excellent value for money. Parents are very supportive of the school, as typified by the many endorsements given by them such as, 'I am so proud that my child makes excellent progress at The Willows; I couldn't really ask for anything more.'

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. I especially enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and at play, and talking with so many of you. You were extremely polite and confident and you were able to say very clearly what you thought about your school.

You and your parents are right to be proud of your school. It is an excellent school where you are exceedingly confident and happy. You obviously enjoy learning very much and work hard. This is because you are exceedingly well cared for. I was very impressed with how much you know about keeping safe and healthy and how caring you are. You are a real credit to your school. Congratulations!

You told me that your teachers make lessons fun because they know you well and are always willing to listen and to help you. As a result you make excellent progress in your work.

Your headteacher and teachers are always trying to make things even better for you so I have suggested that the children in the Reception classes have more choice about their learning in the outdoor area like the Nursery children do.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your learning.