

Willowbrook School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132778
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	335194
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Mary Massey HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms V Rollason
Headteacher	Mrs M Marlow
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and pupils and talked to a small number of parents. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including pupils' work, the school development plan, minutes of meetings and the school's own parents' survey.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the use of assessment information to help raise standards
- the balance between subjects in the curriculum and how well it provides all pupils with a broad experience of learning
- arrangements for senior leaders to monitor the work of the school so they have a thorough understanding of its performance
- the effectiveness of the role of the governing body in providing effective support and challenge to the school.

Information about the school

Willowbrook is an average-sized primary school with rising numbers. A nursery provides 26 full time equivalent places. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than that found in most schools. Although the majority of pupils are White British, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils has risen over the last three years and now makes up about one tenth of the school roll. Almost all of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is more than twice the national average. The school has a specialist unit for Key Stage 1 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and a similar unit for Key Stage 2 pupils is under development. These pupils form the largest group of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A smaller proportion has speech, language and communication difficulties. The school holds the following awards: Artsmark Gold, Activemark and Devon Healthy School, Basic Skills.

When Willowbrook School was inspected in March 2008, it was judged to require special measures.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It is now providing a satisfactory education because there has been rapid improvement in nearly all aspects of the school's work. Teachers and support staff are working together as an enthusiastic and cooperative team under the leadership of a very effective headteacher. The atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful, with pupils anxious to talk about what they are learning. One pupil said, 'Teachers are enthusiastic, friendly and look after you.' All of the parents spoken to were positive about the quality of education their children are receiving. Many said how keen their children are to come to school and how much they enjoy their lessons.

The gap between pupils' current attainment and the levels they are expected to reach for their age by the end of Year 6 is closing very rapidly. Attainment in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but assessments at the end of Year 6 over the last three years show that attainment is still below the national average. In 2009 there was an improvement, particularly in mathematics, but there is a legacy of underachievement in the older year groups, and across the school the quality of pupils' writing is still too low. However, the rate of progress for pupils is now far quicker than in the past, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making up lost ground. The majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress, and for some, good progress.

Provision across the school is now far more secure and reliable and this has led to the improvement in achievement. The quality of teaching is much more consistent and focused on helping pupils progress faster. This is evident through the use of 'next steps' and a whole-school system for marking that helps pupils know what they need to do to improve. Teachers ensure that work is broadly matched to pupils' needs. A thorough system to monitor pupils' progress allows teachers to identify those who are underachieving so action can be taken to help. However, the use of assessment is not used well enough to challenge pupils to make good progress, particularly the most able. Although the majority of pupils are now making satisfactory progress, too few, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are making good progress in writing, because teachers are not sufficiently ambitious for pupils and expectations are not high enough. There is good and outstanding practice in the school but this is not yet shared widely enough to develop teachers' skills further.

The curriculum is now broad and balanced for all pupils. All teachers have been involved in planning a curriculum that provides the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through interesting topics that pupils really enjoy. The school provides good care, guidance and support. Those with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable are supported well, and the school has strong partnerships with outside agencies. Effective systems for managing behaviour mean pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, particularly up to Year 4. However, a minority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not always sufficiently focused on learning, and managing their behaviour sometimes interferes with teaching. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

The recent appointment of a permanent headteacher from within the school has ensured that the very secure systems put in place to monitor its performance over the last year are continuing to work effectively. It is already clear that the pace of change has not just been maintained but is accelerating. Plans for future development are grounded in thorough, accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are built on and modified regularly as improvements in provision are made. The new leadership team has some recently appointed members. While the skills and expertise of some are limited, they are beginning to develop through the strong direction provided by the headteacher and the expertise of established subject leaders. Governors have contributed very well to driving the school's improvement. They not only provide appropriate encouragement and challenge but are also taking a lead in strengthening the school's partnership with parents.

The accelerating rate of progress for pupils, and improvements to the curriculum and the quality of leadership and management seen over the last year, demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment for all pupils, particularly in writing.
- Raise the proportion of good or outstanding teaching in order to accelerate progress by
 - setting higher expectations and being more ambitious for pupils, especially those who are more able
 - providing a stronger focus on the quality of individual pupils' learning
 - using assessment data more consistently in lesson planning to ensure that work meets individual pupils' needs
 - building on the good and outstanding practice in the school.
- Extend the capacity of the leadership team to build on the progress already made, by improving the skills and expertise of leaders and managers at all levels and across all aspects of the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed the accuracy of the national assessment information about standards and progress available for the school. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is lower than the national average,

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particularly in their speech and language development. They make satisfactory progress in the nursery and good progress in Years 1 and 2, so by the time they enter Year 3 the majority are at the standard expected for their age. The large majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress overall, with some making good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading. Few are making good progress in writing, because not all teachers demand high enough standards. Overall, standards in tests for Year 6 in 2009 were low in relation to national figures, but in the current Years 5 and 6, pupils' progress is now accelerating, making up for underachievement in previous years. Although boys' attainment is lower than that of girls, in 2009 they made more progress from their starting points.

In lessons, pupils demonstrate good social skills and work very cooperatively with one another. They are beginning to take much more responsibility for their own learning, and work well both independently, and cooperatively in groups. Pupils are beginning to learn the importance of respecting each other's beliefs and values and respond with interest to the spiritual and cultural aspects of the curriculum. Older pupils make a positive contribution to the school community, supporting younger ones by acting as play leaders and listening to them read. Many are involved in fund-raising activities for charity. Almost all pupils in Years 1 to 4 and the large majority in Years 5 and 6 engage enthusiastically with the activities provided in lessons, behave well and work hard to achieve the 'next steps' they are given. They readily transfer literacy, numeracy and ICT skills between subjects and are starting to develop an understanding of the world of work. Pupils are aware of how to eat healthily and the importance of exercise, but there is limited take-up of sporting activities outside the classroom.

Attendance is close to the national average. Older pupils who walk to school alone have the best attendance, and nursery children have the lowest. Persistent absence has dropped substantially over the last year, following the introduction of rigorous systems for encouraging pupils to attend regularly.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching across the school has improved and become more consistent since the last inspection. Although overall it is satisfactory, the proportion of good lessons has increased and some are outstanding. As a result pupils are making better progress. Recent training has developed teachers' skills in providing high quality oral and written feedback, so pupils are increasingly confident in knowing what they need to do in order to improve. The school now has a secure system to monitor pupils' progress, but the data generated are not yet used sufficiently sharply by teachers to ensure that the targets set and work provided for individual pupils is well matched to their needs, and is sufficiently challenging for all pupils, especially the most able. The good and outstanding practice within the school is not yet shared regularly with the staff to develop their skills further.

The new curriculum now has a themed approach to support the development of core skills and builds on pupils' prior experience so there is clear progression from year-to-year. More varied activities ' for example, going on a trip to initiate a new topic ' help to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm. Extra-curricular activities are still limited, but recent extensions to the curriculum, for example through science week, have not only provided an exciting new stimulus for pupils but have also generated considerable enthusiasm amongst the staff and encouraged stronger partnerships with parents.

The school knows its potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities very well. It ensures that both the curriculum and the extra support they are given are well tailored to meet their individual needs, so that they are fully included in all aspects of the school and make similar progress to their peers. There are some striking examples of pupils with complex difficulties successfully engaging with learning as a result of very effective support and intervention by the school. A range of strategies have been very successful in managing pupils with behavioural difficulties, including very effective cooperation with the neighbouring secondary school. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is effective, with many making good progress very quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher has high expectations of both teaching and support staff, providing a clear vision for the school and strong leadership, grounded in practical action. She is supported by a strong leadership team, although some are new to their roles and require further training. The absolute commitment of the senior leaders to improving provision in order to raise standards and maximise life opportunities for every individual pupil is shared by the staff, who feel both supported and accountable. Targets are increasingly challenging as the rate of pupils' progress accelerates. Monitoring of the impact of actions taken is regular and systematic and this leads to thorough analysis, which then informs future planning. Sometimes, however, the school's assessment of the quality of teaching is too generous, with a focus on the activities of the teacher rather than the quality of pupils' learning. The school is using a wide range of partnerships very effectively in order to help development, for example in managing behaviour.

Governors with a wide range of experience and a strong commitment to the school and the local community have been appointed to the governing body. They are led by an experienced chair, who has ensured that staff views are taken into account when deciding on the future direction of the school. The provision of a community room encourages parents to come into school and be involved with their children's learning. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and the implementation of systems for looking after vulnerable children is very thorough. The school is making a satisfactory start in promoting community cohesion by establishing mutually beneficial relationships with the local community, but national and global links are still underdeveloped. The school's accurate and thorough analysis of outcomes for different groups of pupils indicates that the school is making satisfactory progress in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into the nursery quickly and establish good relationships with adults and their peers as a result of a good induction strategy. They behave well, enjoy their work and play and so quickly develop self-confidence. Relationships with parents are good. Their views are valued and are used to plan the next steps in their child's learning. On-going assessments are recorded systematically to plan work which is matched to the needs and interests of the children. As a result, they make satisfactory progress from a below average starting point, but most pupils are still achieving below what is expected for their age when they leave the nursery. Careful planning ensures there is a satisfactory balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. There is an emphasis on promoting the children's personal and social development, their linguistic skills and their knowledge and understanding of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their understanding of personal hygiene and healthy living during the well organised snack time. Provision in Early Years Support unit is outstanding and enables the most vulnerable children to be integrated into the wider life of the school.

The recently appointed early years coordinator has a good understanding of young children's needs and satisfactory vision for the development of the provision. A sound start has been made on the reviewing long-term planning in order to ensure greater continuity and progression. However, monitoring procedures are at an early stage of development. Display areas and classroom floor space are not consistently used to best effect to create a stimulating learning environment. The outdoor space is much improved but still lacks an all-weather canopy, so the school has been unable to fully exploit the use of this provision as a natural extension of the classroom.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

A recent parental survey undertaken by the school and interviews with some parents during the inspection indicated that the vast majority of parents have confidence in the school and are happy with the education it is providing for their children. In particular they emphasised:

- good security on the school site and their belief that their children are safe in school
- improved communications and ease of access to the headteacher and their child's class teacher
- the friendliness of support staff and smiling faces in the school's reception area
- the school's encouragement for them to come into school and to be involved in their child's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willowbrook School, Exeter EX4 8NN

Thank you for your welcome and the help that you gave us during the recent inspection of your school. I have now visited you four times since your last inspection and I think your school is now giving you a better and satisfactory standard of education. For this reason you'll be pleased to know that your school no longer requires extra help to improve. The teachers, the governors and your parents will be very pleased about this. Here are some things that we thought were particularly good about your school.

- Your headteacher makes sure that everybody works well together and everyone is included.
- Over the last year you have been progressing well with your work, and in all the lessons we went into nearly everyone was working hard. Many of you were using your 'next steps' to help.
- We found that you are very good at working on your own and you are very cooperative with each other when you work in groups.
- Teachers have reorganised the way they plan lessons and so now all of you can learn a full range of subjects throughout the week.
- Your teachers mark your work carefully and tell you how to improve.
- The school is good at looking after you and you are not afraid to seek help if you ever have a problem.
- Many of your parents are enjoying coming into assembly and activities like 'Science Week'.

We have asked the staff to look at three areas to improve further. They need to make sure that:

- every one of you achieves as well as you can, especially in writing
- all your lessons are as good as possible, and that the work you are given is challenging enough so you make faster progress
- the school's leaders learn from one another so they all do the best possible job of helping your school get better still.

I hope very much that you will all work hard to help your school continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Mary Massey
Her Majesty's Inspector

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