

Willow Fields Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108783
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337150
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Brown HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Hartnack
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors spent 40% of their time observing learning, visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, members of staff, the chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, groups of pupils, and a group of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking evidence and a sample of pupils' workbooks. Thirty-six parental questionnaires were received and these were fully considered.

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

- the progress of all groups of pupils
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and personal development
- the effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers on outcomes for pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in bringing about improvement since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in the north of the City of Sunderland. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils are almost exclusively White British. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and the Activemark. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in one Foundation Stage unit for children aged three to five- years-old. The school runs its own breakfast club.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that serves its pupils and community well. A dedicated headteacher, hardworking staff and committed governors, have created a stimulating learning environment in which pupils thrive and a rich curriculum that broadens their horizons. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very positive attitudes to learning and make good progress. The school has established highly positive relationships with parents and carers, who are very supportive of its work, and also with the local community.

Children start school with skills that are well below average particularly in their social and language development. In the Early Years Foundation Stage they settle quickly and make good progress. When they enter Key Stage 1, they are well on the way to reaching levels expected of five-year-olds although their social and communication skills remain below average. Progress slows slightly in Key Stage 1 where, despite a carefully planned transition process, many younger pupils continue to need adult support when working in pairs and small groups. Progress picks up again in Key Stage 2, so that by Year 6 pupils reach standards that are broadly average. Teaching is good and assessment is used effectively to identify all pupils who require additional support or challenge. Such interventions are accurately targeted and regularly reviewed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from sensitive, well-managed support and make good progress.

A carefully designed curriculum meets very effectively the learning and personal development needs of pupils, many of whom have limited experiences of life beyond the immediate locality. There is an appropriately strong emphasis on the development and use of basic skills in literacy and numeracy through a wide range of well-planned educational visits and first-hand experiences. Opportunities to develop and apply information and communication technology (ICT) skills are identified but they are more limited. Residential visits to Kielder Forest, London and Paris involve weeks of planning and preparation by the pupils and provide them with experiences they will never forget. They are equally enthusiastic about visits to places closer to home, such as Chinatown in Newcastle, art galleries and bookshops. Such experiences provide pupils with something meaningful to talk and write about on their return. The school's excellent resources are generally used very effectively to support learning and stimulate pupils' interest, although teachers do not always make the most of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils and to enhance learning.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. Good quality teaching, a well-organised and imaginative curriculum, together with the school's effective work with parents and

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carers, have resulted in good progress for pupils. Leaders and managers have a clear and accurate knowledge of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They have shown themselves to be effective in overcoming barriers to improvement. As one pupil put it 'This school always moves forward'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that assessments made at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage provide more information about the social and emotional development needs of children
 - providing more opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to work in small groups with adults to promote their social, emotional and intellectual development.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in information and communication technology, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to acquire information and communication technology skills and to apply them across the curriculum
 - making better use of new technology in lessons to motivate and inspire pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

All pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. The majority attend regularly. They are polite, courteous and helpful to adults and to each other. Their behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils develop confidence in themselves and in their abilities by participating in the school's broad and imaginative curriculum. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 were working on the story of a child who is chosen by her village to fight a dragon. They were comfortable when asked to go into role and sit in the 'hot seat'. They were able to explain the feelings and justify the actions of the dragon, the child and the village leader. Older pupils were proud of their ability to travel across London on the tube.

Pupils develop skills and attitudes that will serve them well during the next stage of their education. They apply their skills in literacy and numeracy across a wide range of activities from shopping in the local supermarket to managing the food budget when they go on a residential visit. They work well in teams to organise activities and to solve problems during business and enterprise weeks. They learn to work with a range of other adults, such as visitors from the emergency and health services. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but their knowledge and understanding of other faiths is less secure, although they are interested in other people and ideas.

Pupils feel safe in school, a view supported strongly by their parents and carers. They say that there is very little bullying and that should any occur it is dealt with swiftly by the headteacher and staff. They also understand about healthy lifestyles. A large majority stay for school lunch, which provides a range of healthy choices. They understand the need to be active and participate regularly in physical activities and sport. Many pupils also have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Pupils

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contribute on a regular basis to community events such as the distribution of harvest gifts and singing and performing in nearby care homes. They are keen to take on responsibilities. Senior leaders involve them in decision making on a regular basis, both as individuals and through the school council.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Predominantly good teaching ensures that pupils are motivated and keen to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations and a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn next. They take time to ensure that pupils understand what a lesson is about and what they are expected to achieve. These expectations become the focus for the teacher's assessment and helpful marking, and they assist the pupils in evaluating their own work. Carefully targeted support, such as that provided for individuals or small groups in Year 6 for mathematics, allows pupils time to develop and articulate their understanding of complex concepts, such as probability. Most pupils know what they need to do to improve their work but a minority have difficulty in remembering their precise targets. As one pupil said 'If you don't know your targets you

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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can't get better!

Classroom routines are generally well-established. They ensure that pupils settle quickly to their work and that a suitably brisk pace is maintained. Some no better than satisfactory teaching was seen, where an overemphasis on consolidating previous work slowed the lesson down, or pupils were not sufficiently secure with classroom routines. The curriculum is a strength of the school. Effective care, guidance and support make a major contribution to pupils' good personal development. Pupils feel safe and know that the headteacher and staff will deal with any concerns quickly and effectively. A breakfast club ensures a calm start to the day for those who attend. A cookery club, run by a group of school staff, including the cook, emphasises healthy eating.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully shared his vision for the school with all members of the school community. Staff and governors are determined to make this school 'the best it can be' and pupils and parents are proud to be part of it. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and they have identified accurately what the school needs to do to improve further. Governors are involved actively in the life of the school. They know it well and provide both good support and appropriate challenge.

The headteacher has been the driving force behind the improvements made since the last inspection. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved, although they remain broadly average, and much has been done to improve the skills and effectiveness of senior managers and subject leaders. The school understands very well and values highly the community in which it works. It recognises that there is a need to look outwards and it ensures pupils, and wherever possible, parents and carers, have a wide range of opportunities to engage with people from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. In doing so it makes a strong contribution to promoting cohesion within and beyond the local community. Similarly, equal opportunities are promoted strongly within school and every chance is taken to question stereotypes and tackle discrimination. A range of partners and community groups, such as the police and the Salvation Army, help the school to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of Willow Fields' pupils. Parents and carers welcome the chance to take part in family learning activities and 'back to school' days alongside their children. The school building is the only facility available to the community and groups are welcomed on a regular

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basis.

Safeguarding arrangements and systems for child protection are robust and fully meet requirements. Thorough risk assessments are a key element in the school's wide range of educational visits.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage unit soon after their third birthday. They make good progress, but as they move into Year 1 many continue to lack the confidence and skills necessary to work alone or in a small group without an adult close by. Constructive relationships are established between staff, children and their parents and carers during a home visit before each child starts school. Parents and carers are able to talk with staff about their children's interests and share any concerns. Children settle quickly in the warm and welcoming learning environment. With the help and support of their key workers they become increasingly active learners able to make choices about the activities in which they will take part. They move confidently between the indoor and outdoor space both of which contain stimulating resources and well-planned activities.

There is a good balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities for individuals, pairs and small groups. Children play well together, taking turns and sharing equipment. Small groups are brought together, for example, to learn about linking sounds to letters and then how to write the letters. They listen attentively to familiar stories and show their enthusiasm and enjoyment when joining in. Two children spent time telling each

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other the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. The older one ensured that the story was told in the right order. The other very much enjoyed taking on the role of the mother when she tells Jack off for coming home with magic beans instead of something for supper. Frequent observations of children's progress are made and used effectively to plan interesting and purposeful activities based on a secure understanding of what individual children can do now and need to do next. Achievements are recorded in individual 'Learning Journeys' and shared with parents and carers.

The relatively new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has a very clear understanding of how young children learn. Staff work well together and make an effective team.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. Those spoken to were particularly appreciative of the very many opportunities their children have to visit other places and meet other people. They also welcomed the ways in which the school keeps their children safe and informs them about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Willow Fields Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 143 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	75	9	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	83	5	14	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	69	10	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	78	7	19	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	83	5	14	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	81	6	17	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	72	9	25	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	72	9	25	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	72	9	25	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	61	10	28	3	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	64	11	31	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	75	8	22	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	75	7	19	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willow Fields Community Primary School, Sunderland SR5 5RZ

I want to thank you for the very warm welcome that you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited you recently. We really enjoyed our time with you. I would particularly like to thank those of you who came to talk with us and your parents and carers for returning the questionnaire.

We agree with you and your parents and carers – Willow Fields is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to do their best for you and you help them by coming to school regularly and being so polite and well behaved. As a result of good teaching and exciting opportunities, you enjoy school and reach standards in Year 6 that are broadly in line with the national average. Well done!

We think it is really important for you to carry on visiting places like Kielder, London and Paris – and all those other places like museums, art galleries and book shops. We were really impressed with your confident attitudes and your willingness to try new things.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to:

- make more use of the interactive whiteboards to help you to learn
- help you to use ICT more when you are working in lessons and on projects
- help those of you who move from the Early Years Foundation Stage unit into Year 1 to develop the confidence to work on your own and in small groups.

Please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Brown

Her Majesty's Inspector

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