

Willowbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115041
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338497
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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 of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gill Schofield
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Taggart
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, held meetings with governors and staff, and spoke to pupils. They observed the school's work; this included scrutinising samples of pupils' work, school data, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and the responses to 56 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- how well teachers use assessment data to ensure that boys make the same progress as girls
- the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and how well they are supported in their learning
- the impact of school initiatives to improve achievement, especially in writing in Key Stage 1
- how well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the work of the school, identify sharply areas for improvement and work effectively to address them.

Information about the school

Willowbrook is smaller than average and the school's roll has declined since the last inspection. Most pupils are of white British heritage. A small number of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. About a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is above average, as is the proportion who has a statement of special educational need. The needs of these pupils mostly relate to moderate learning difficulties with a recent significant increase in speech, language and communication needs. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at different times of the year affects all year groups and is higher than average.

The school is about to undergo a rebuilding programme which has resulted in all classes being relocated into the junior building. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards.

The Chuckles Breakfast and After School Clubs and the Wind in the Willows Breakfast and After School Clubs and Nursery share the school site but are not managed by the governing body.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they are well taught and lessons are interesting and fun. One pupil said very simply, 'It's a good school and I never want to leave.' This good school welcomes new arrivals, whatever their background, and ensures by careful assessment of their needs that they are helped to settle quickly and make good progress. As a result of the well-planned curriculum and a wide range of interesting additional learning opportunities, pupils achieve well in their time at Willowbrook. They have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The school meets safeguarding requirements well. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and to the local community. Everyone is looking forward to the new school building and managing efficiently the day-to-day changes that result from a building project running alongside their work and play.

Children make a good start to their learning in Early Years Foundation Stage and from skills and abilities that are below the levels expected make good progress so by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, pupils reach average standards. Lessons are well structured and data collected on pupils' progress is used efficiently to set tasks that engage and challenge them well so there is a real learning buzz throughout the school. However, some teachers do not make clear to pupils, when they talk to them or mark their work, what steps they need to take to improve their work and make even better progress.

The headteacher provides good leadership. She has united staff in a shared determination to drive the school forward and raise the attainment of pupils further. The work of the governors is satisfactory. They are actively reviewing their committee structure and allocation of responsibilities. They recognise that there is more work to be done on improving their skills so that they can ask more searching questions of senior staff and monitor carefully the effectiveness of new initiatives. The self-evaluation of all areas of the work of the school, carried out by the headteacher and senior staff, is accurate. New initiatives to improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly for boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are showing clear signs of success. Standards in literacy have improved throughout the school. The school is a harmonious, happy community in which all pupils are valued. Leaders and managers are not complacent and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers guide pupils more consistently to make better progress, by giving clear feedback on what they do well and how to improve their work through

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lessons and when they mark pupils' work.

- Improve the skills of governors so that they are more effective in holding the school to account by prioritising sharply areas identified for improvement and evaluating the impact of school initiatives on outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In most lessons observed pupils were seen to be making good progress. They love to discuss ideas together, work sensibly in small groups and are able to work well independently. Pupils' ability to stay on task and gain from their lessons is a reflection of the love of learning that is encouraged in school and the challenge that teachers incorporate into lessons.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. The apparent progress they make, as represented by the results of national assessment tests, is distorted by the effect of mobility. Pupils who join the school at different times have often lagged behind in their learning previously and a significant proportion has particular learning difficulties or emotional needs. New pupils are helped to settle quickly. Their needs are accurately assessed and they are provided with a flexible range of support so they too make good progress as soon as possible. The school's comprehensive tracking data confirm that all pupils make good progress during their time in the school. As a result of the recent strategies implemented by the school, boys' achievement has improved, especially in writing, and the attainment of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now closer to that of similar pupils nationally. There is clear evidence of this in the 2009 national tests.

A good feature of the school is the kindness and care that pupils show to each other. The school ethos for valuing each individual is reflected well in the social and moral development of pupils. Pupils mix well at playtime and lunchtime and the house system promotes good integration of different age groups. Parents and carers are positive about behaviour and their children's development. One parent said, 'I feel that every child at this school, regardless of educational ability, is given equal opportunities and support to excel wherever possible.' The good progress that pupils make, the love of learning they develop and their good personal skills equip them well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' 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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The inspection confirmed the school's view that the quality of teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and relationships at every level are good. Behaviour is well managed and so a good learning ethos exists in classrooms. Teachers have good subject knowledge, explain new concepts well and make learning interesting. This interest is further extended by careful integration of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills as they are woven into the topic work for different year groups. Juniors looking at exciting verbs and abstracting facts from newspaper articles, for example, used a report on the assassination of Julius Caesar to link literacy with their project on Roman civilization.

In lessons pupils are clear about what they are to learn and are encouraged to evaluate their own learning by identifying what they understand or where they might need extra help. Good use is made of assessment information in planning lessons so that tasks are carefully structured to meet the different learning needs of pupils in the class. In some classes where there is a particularly broad range of abilities, work may be planned at five different levels. However, although teachers mark work regularly and give praise, some do not routinely make it clear to pupils how and where they can improve a piece of work. Teachers work in good partnership with learning support assistants, who are well trained and provide high quality support for pupils who do not find learning easy or need help to catch up with missed work. The care of pupils is given a high priority. As a result, pupils seek help when they need it, assured of a prompt response from all adults. The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences that allows pupils of all abilities to explore their interests and make good progress with their learning. Pupils'

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achievement in literacy has been improved by the use of a range of carefully selected programmes such as narrative story therapy, word of the week and time to talk. Careful monitoring of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is promoting very effective targeted support to help promote improved progress for pupils with a range of identified learning needs. The school especially values its sports partnerships through Sport England. A good range of clubs, visits out of school and visitors extend learning beyond the classroom well. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills and banks of laptop computers move from class to class as needed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

A clear and ambitious educational direction has been set for the school. Effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies enhance provision. Teamwork in the school is strong and this is shown in the accurate diagnosis of priorities for development made by the headteacher and senior staff. Resources are well deployed to support the good progress that pupils make and the school provides good value for money. The recent demolition of one classroom block, the first phase of the school rebuilding programme, has led to organisational problems that have been well managed to ensure that a safe, stimulating learning environment has been maintained. Governors have made a careful assessment of their role and contribution to the school. They have ensured that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding children and providing equality of opportunity. They recognise that their support of the school must be balanced by measured challenge based on a clear understanding of the development priorities of the school and monitoring of all aspects of its development.

The contribution made by the school to the local community is good. Links with other schools, including a school in Ghana, and studies of other areas of the globe by pupils enhance their perceptions of their role as citizens. Their sense of responsibility to the world in which they live is linked well to their social, moral and cultural development. Links with the wider British community are not as well developed and the school recognise this as an area to develop. The school works diligently to make close and supportive links with parents and involve them fully in their children's education. A good range of workshops and joint events are helpful to parents and help forge even stronger links with the school.

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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	3
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 settle quickly and happily in the exciting learning environment that is created for them in the Reception class. As a result of the new building plans, enterprising arrangements have been made to adapt a former junior classroom into a well-organised Early Years Foundation Stage base. However, there has been some restriction to the use of the outdoor learning area which staff manage well. Satisfactory resources are used imaginatively to engage children and provide stimulation for them. Good leadership by the headteacher, who works in a close and very effective partnership with the two Reception teachers, ensures that children thrive in their learning and develop a love for school.

Pupils enter Reception with skills and abilities that are particularly weak in emotional development, some elements of language and literacy, and numeracy. Good teaching and a well-planned range of exciting activities across the six areas of learning ensure that children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 are close to average across all the areas of learning.

Children mix well and learn to share. Independence is also fostered carefully so children quickly learn to tidy things away when they have finished with them. There is a clear emphasis on developing language skills with innovative ways to encourage children to talk. For example, an activity based on drawing objects from a bag held by the teacher became a magical experience as children carefully selected their secret item and talked about it to the rest of the class. Hushed whispers were quickly followed by delighted laughter as objects were identified. The steps made in each child's development are

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closely and regularly recorded. Links with parents are good so parents have regular information about their children.

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 who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspectors are very happy with the school. They value the fact that their children love school and find learning exciting. They feel the school is led and managed well and the headteacher and staff have a strong commitment to maximising the learning opportunities available to their children. One parent wrote, 'All staff are welcoming and go out of their way to do their best for the children. They encourage children to be healthy and there are lots of clubs and activities.' Inspectors fully endorse these views. A very small minority of parents were concerned about the progress their child was making, particularly if they had special educational needs and/or disabilities. The analysis of provision for these pupils is a high priority in the school and inspection evidence confirmed that all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Willowbrook 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	59	23	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	70	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	39	32	57	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	50	22	39	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	61	20	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	54	23	41	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	64	20	36	0	0	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)	20	36	30	54	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	48	25	45	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	43	25	45	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	41	29	52	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	64	19	34	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	73	15	27	0	0	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.



30 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Willowbrook Primary School

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so helpful and polite. We really enjoyed our visit. You are very excited about your new school building and several of you showed us the plans on display in the hall. We were particularly impressed with how much you know about being healthy and keeping safe. You told us how much you liked your school and that you enjoyed your lessons because they were interesting and fun. We agree with you that you go to a good school where there are lots of activities and learning is enjoyable.

Your teachers encourage you to work hard and make good progress in lessons. You all get on well together and are well cared for. You make a good contribution to your school and the local community. The headteacher, other staff and governors work well together to make your school a happy and successful place in which to learn. We have asked them to do two things to make your school even better:

- your teachers should make certain that when they are talking to you about your work, and when they mark your books, it is very clear to you how you can improve a piece of work so that you make even better progress. You can help by letting your teachers know when you are not sure what you need to do next.
- the governors of your school should look carefully at new plans to improve the work of the school, see which ones are most important and keep a close check on their development to make sure that your school continues to improve.

It was a great privilege to visit Willowbrook and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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