

# The Willows Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124669
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	340625
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Dawson

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	149
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Fotheringham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Vanessa Kingsley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Downing Close Ipswich Suffolk
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven teachers or higher level teaching assistants teaching eight lessons and held meetings with pupils, staff, governors and informal discussions with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress, plans for development and the curriculum, and procedures for safeguarding pupils. They analysed 68 parental questionnaires and the views of staff and pupils.

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

- whether the improved progress in 2009 has been maintained for this academic year
- how well teaching and learning are monitored and what has been the impact on pupils' learning
- pupils' involvement in planning and evaluating their learning and in taking responsibility for improving their work.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a social housing estate in Ipswich. Most pupils are White British and those from different ethnic backgrounds are fluent English speakers. Almost half the pupils are believed to be eligible for free school meals. More pupils than average have statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities for specific learning or speech, language and communication. There is independent childcare provision on the school site, which will be inspected separately. The headteacher joined the school at the beginning of this term and the school had an interim headteacher from September 2009.

**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

The school has maintained a satisfactory education for the pupils since the previous headteacher left a year ago. The new headteacher has swiftly identified where improvements are needed and has implemented several measures to raise pupils' achievement. Very clear systems for tracking pupils' progress, for example, have identified where additional support is needed. This has helped to ensure pupils maintain satisfactory progress and to attain standards that are close to average by the end of Year 6. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they progress as well as their peers.

A new management structure has been planned for September, but at present, improvements are being driven almost entirely by the vision and expertise of the new headteacher. Other teachers are not yet sufficiently involved in school development or in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Governors are very supportive and know their school well. They fulfil their statutory duties but have had little input into school development. However, senior teachers and subject leaders now have a clear focus for future planning and evaluation because there are unambiguous plans to improve provision and pupils' learning. These have not had time to have had a significant impact but teachers have responded well to new initiatives. The new marking policy, for example, has improved the guidance for pupils in most classes. These solid foundations for change provide a sound capacity for future improvement.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly over the last few months and is now good. The good pastoral guidance and consistent systems for managing behaviour ensure pupils know what is expected of them. They feel safe in school and take good care of each other. They enjoy their learning and work hard. Teachers generally question pupils well, testing understanding and extending learning. While most lessons are planned effectively to cater for the range of pupils' abilities, there is insufficient challenge for some pupils so that their progress is not as rapid as it should be. This is because a minority of teachers' planning is not sufficiently focused on what pupils should be achieving and they do not make enough use of tracking data to set challenging work. Some teachers do not give enough written guidance when marking pupils' work and pupils are rarely involved in evaluating their own work or planning topics for themselves. Sometimes, pupils do not know what they should be aiming for. This prevents them from taking responsibility for their learning or pursuing their own interests.

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and improvements needed in the provision, especially teaching, through informal observations of lessons and in the outcomes for pupils. She has already agreed generic plans for improvement with the staff and governors. She is aware of the need to develop leaders' confidence in

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evaluating learning and teaching and helping each other and other teachers to develop their expertise.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Fully involve leaders, managers and governors in school development and self-evaluation.
- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good and accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring teachers have high expectations of their pupils, tracking their progress themselves and identifying any underachievement in order to challenge pupils of all abilities
  - fully implementing the school's marking policy so that all teachers provide clear written advice that enables pupils to improve and extend their work
  - focusing lesson observations on pupils' learning, identifying good practice to share and ensuring any necessary improvements are addressed.
- Help pupils to become more responsible for their learning by:
  - making sure that they are clear about what they are expected to learn
  - involving them in evaluating their work and setting their own targets
  - allowing them to make decisions about what they will learn about while maintaining the rigorous development of skills.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Many pupils join Key Stage 1 with knowledge and skills that are considerably below age-related expectations. Until 2009, standards by Year 6 remained significantly below average. However in 2009 standards in English and mathematics were closer to the national average and pupils made satisfactory progress from Year 2. The present cohort is working at similar levels. Pupils made good progress in several of the lessons observed during the inspection. Teachers make sure that learning is developed systematically throughout the lesson and test pupils' understanding regularly, giving good support when appropriate. Pupils' good attitudes to work and enthusiasm make a positive contribution to their learning. They are eager to please their teachers but have few opportunities to extend their learning independently. In less effective lessons not enough is expected of more able or the older pupils and they do not know what they need to do to excel.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. The school council is beginning to have an impact on school life. It sought pupils' views and selected a new uniform, for example, and visited another school in order to make an informed decision about suitable

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equipment for games at lunchtime. The play leaders help to ensure pupils enjoy the games to the full, often organising group games themselves. Pupils' contribution to the wider and global community is less well developed. Although most pupils know how to maintain healthy lifestyles, in practice, their packed lunches and the choices they make at lunchtime do not often reflect this, in spite of the school's efforts.

Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are acquiring satisfactory skills, including the use of information and communication technology, to prepare them for their futures. They respect each other, delighting in their friends' achievements and, although their understanding of the similarities and diversity of British and worldwide societies is limited to what they learn in lessons, racial harmony reigns throughout the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

The good relationships between teachers and pupils and the consistent expectation of good behaviour ensure that there is a good climate for learning in lessons. Teachers explain things clearly and teaching assistants support pupils well because they are given clear guidelines by the teachers. Some are highly skilled and make a significant

<sup>1</sup> 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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contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers use resources well. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used the interactive whiteboard very effectively to slowly reveal a picture as pupils used compound adjectives to describe what they saw. However, throughout the school, teachers do not make the most of pupils' good attitudes to work by involving them in taking responsibility for their learning. The good oral advice given to pupils in lessons is not always evident in their written work and, where teachers do give written advice, it is not always responded to by the pupils. While teachers have good subject knowledge, a minority do not plan work that will enable pupils to attain age-related standards. This lack of aspiration inhibits progress.

The school uses a range of schemes to deliver the curriculum, ensuring it is broad and balanced. It is evolving and the school has plans to introduce a curriculum with a more international focus in September. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and the school makes good use of local links to enhance their experiences further. This is especially effective for sport and music and the choir is making a compact disc with local schools. Other schools and the local authority have provided support to improve aspects of the provision that the headteacher has identified as areas for development. Basic skills are developed satisfactorily and the pupils learn French.

The World Cup theme is extending pupils' understanding of economic, social and cultural diversity as they study the countries of participants and South Africa. The good personal, social and health education curriculum has helped pupils develop good self-esteem and has improved behaviour. Day-to-day care is good and outside agencies, such as the pupil referral unit, provide additional support. Very good links with the playgroup ensure children settle into the Nursery quickly. Pupils' views are respected and, although they do not have much responsibility for their learning, their views have contributed to school development and activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has made a very good start to her leadership. She has a very clear vision for the school based on an astute analysis of the strengths and areas for development. The leadership team has been reorganised to reflect teachers' strengths and each member has clearly defined roles. Teachers are embracing the changes and beginning to amend their practice to enhance pupils' learning. These initiatives are very

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new and the impact is not yet apparent in the outcomes for pupils. The leadership team is aware that they need to develop their roles in order to contribute to school development and evaluation. All stakeholders, including parents and carers are treated equally and welcomed in school and all pupils, regardless of race gender, have full access to all school activities, although some do not have the challenge they need to excel. The school complies with the statutory requirements for ensuring pupils' safety. The school works hard to reach out to parents, with some success. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in school development and there are plans to engage them in generating a homework policy. There is a very small minority of parents who do not ensure their children attend school regularly and the school works hard to support these families. Local community links are good and pupils benefit from strong partnerships with other agencies, such as the pupil referral unit and the other schools in the cluster. Plans to develop national and international community cohesion have not yet been fully implemented although the school has established links with a school in a seaside town where older pupils are visiting and camping.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Although many children join the Nursery having attended the attached playgroup, the majority have significantly lower knowledge and skills than normally expected for their age. They share the site and the equipment with the playgroup and happily use the inside and outdoor environment as they wish. Adults take responsibility for small groups of children and record their progress, often backed up with photographs for children and



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parents to enjoy. There are points during each session when children work with adults. However, adults do not refine the available resources to promote specific learning so that the choices children make when deciding what to play with help them to learn more quickly. This is not the case in the Reception class, where activities are carefully planned to consolidate or generate new learning, based on detailed assessments which identify each child's learning needs. As a result, activities are purposeful and children's progress has improved significantly during this academic year. As a result many have attained age-related expectations in most aspects of the curriculum. Children's communication, language and literacy skills and some aspects of their personal development remain below those normally expected of their age.

The school has made good use of local authority advice to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Nursery and Reception class are in different parts of the school, but, from September, there will be a purpose built unit, led by a newly-appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader. The effective team now in the Reception class will be working in the Nursery.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

Parents are extremely positive about almost all aspects of the school's work and all those who returned the questionnaires indicated that their children are happy in school. The inspectors agree that the school is a happy place. Although none commented, almost a quarter of the questionnaires did not feel that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour well. The inspection found that there are now good procedures for this and, as a result, behaviour in school is good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Willows 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	56	30	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	49	33	49	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	40	36	53	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	43	36	53	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	46	36	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	38	38	56	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	34	42	62	2	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)	24	35	38	56	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	35	42	62	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	26	36	53	10	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	26	45	66	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	28	45	66	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	43	39	57	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Willows Primary School, Suffolk, IP2 9ER

Thank you all very much for your help and support when we visited your school recently. A special thanks to the school council who shared your views with me.

I was pleased to see how much you enjoy school and how well you behave. You help to make your school a happy and welcoming place. Your school takes good care of you all.

You make steady progress during your time at The Willows school and children in the Reception class have made good progress over the last year. Most of Year 6 pupils are working at the levels expected of their age. Although some of you do not find learning easy, because you have good support you can be proud of your achievements. Well done. Others of you do not always have the challenge you need to help you achieve all you are capable of and you are not able to take enough responsibility for your learning because your teachers do not give you enough advice when they mark your work. So I have asked them to help you all make good progress by making sure you know what you have to learn, that your work is challenging and that their marking helps you to improve and extend your learning. I want them to help you decide how well you have done for yourselves so that you can set your own targets. I would like you to help your teachers plan what you will learn about next so that you can pick things that really interest you all...you will have to discuss your ideas with each other.

Your new headteacher has lots of good ideas and is already making improvements. I have asked her to help other leaders and the governors to take more responsibility for planning improvements and checking to see how well the school, and all of you, are doing. Your school provides a satisfactory education and I know that you will enjoy taking some responsibility for improving what and how you learn yourselves. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Dawson

Lead inspector

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