

Inspection of The Willows Primary School

Tayfield Road, Woodhouse Park, Manchester M22 1BQ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive each day smiling and happy. They like learning together. Pupils feel safe, respected and cared for. Children in the early years settle quickly into well-established routines. They enjoy exploring the stimulating environment leaders have created.

Pupils know that leaders have high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. This helps them to achieve well in a range of subjects. If bullying should occur, pupils are confident that any incidents would be resolved quickly by staff.

Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well. Their respect for each other permeates the school. Pupils' wide-ranging understanding of different cultures and beliefs prepares them very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy the many clubs that they can join including cookery and yoga. Pupils are tremendously proud of the improvements that they have made to their local community. For example, they have cleared litter from the local park and successfully reduced traffic congestion around school.

Pupils benefit from rich experiences that enhance the curriculum further, such as visits to places of interest. They enjoy many opportunities to learn outdoors where they develop their confidence and teamwork.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The well-designed curriculum reflects the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND). From the early years to Year 6, leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to have and the order in which it should be taught. Opportunities for pupils to practise what they know are skilfully woven through the curriculum. Pupils begin to make links between other subjects when learning something new. This helps pupils to remember the curriculum well.

Leaders provide appropriate training for staff. This ensures that staff have the knowledge that they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Skilled staff accurately identify the needs of pupils, including children in the early years, with SEND. Leaders engage well with other agencies and professionals. This ensures that appropriate support is in place so that pupils with SEND can learn effectively alongside their classmates.

Teachers use a range of assessment strategies to check pupils' understanding. This helps teachers to identify what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. However, at times, teachers do not use assessment information as effectively as they could. This means that, on occasion, progress through the curriculum is hindered for some pupils.

The development of pupils' vocabulary knowledge is given a high priority. A love of reading is fostered throughout the school. In the early years, staff are very effective in the strategies that they use to develop children's spoken language. Children enjoy sharing books and listening to familiar stories in an environment that is rich in vocabulary. In key stage 1, pupils begin to read widely and often across a range of topics. Older pupils reflect on the books that they have read, for example, the books that provoke discussion about diversity.

Phonics is taught from the time that children enter the Reception class. Children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. The books that they read match the sounds that they know. Over time, pupils become confident, fluent readers. Those pupils who struggle with reading, including those at the early stages of reading in key stage 2, benefit from the support that they receive from skilled staff.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. There are very few disruptions in lessons. This helps pupils to focus on their learning.

Leaders nurture pupils' personal, social and emotional development exceptionally well. Pupils with SEND access all that the school has to offer. All pupils are encouraged to be the very best version of themselves. Pupils respect the individual liberty of others and enthusiastically celebrate both differences and similarities between people in modern society. Visitors help to broaden pupils' aspirations for future career choices. Visiting authors, trips to art galleries and live performances also contribute highly to pupils' cultural development.

Governors and members of the board of trustees use their knowledge and expertise effectively to hold leaders to account. Staff appreciate the way leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are extremely vigilant. Regular training ensures that they know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Staff quickly recognise any changes in pupils' or children's manner or behaviour. Leaders respond appropriately to ensure that pupils are safe. Effective partnerships with other agencies mean that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the help and support that they need.

Leaders work with charities and a range of public services to enhance pupils' understanding of risks. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know how to report any situations that make them feel uncomfortable, including when they are using social media. Skilled staff provide support when pupils have any worries or concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, in some subjects, assessment information is not used as effectively as it should be. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively so that all pupils achieve as well as they should across the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139438
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10226242
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Richard Dyson
Executive Headteacher	Sue Spiteri
Website	www.willows.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new head of school has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school is part of the Children of Success Schools Trust.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and staff and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the trust board and the local governing body. The inspectors also spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the leadership team and staff.

- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. She also held a telephone conversation with the chair of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. The inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to staff. They also spoke to pupils about their learning and their experiences of the school. Inspectors considered pupils' work and listened to pupils read. Inspectors also considered the curriculums for history and computing.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding including employment checks on staff working in the school and records for safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the response to the staff and pupils' surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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