

Willow Lane Community Primary School

Willow Lane, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 5PR

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school and achieve well whatever their starting points.
- Children get a very good start to their learning in the Reception Year.
- Teaching is good across the school, with much that is outstanding. Consequently, pupils learn quickly. Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils and nearly always plan work that gets the best from them.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because they are helped to learn well by the adults who support and guide them.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils get on very well with their teachers and with each other. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are very keen to learn. They say they are very well looked after and feel completely safe in school.
- School leaders and governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and where it can improve further. They have worked well together to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Parents are very supportive and appreciative of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in reading is not as strong as in mathematics and writing at Key Stage 2.
- Just occasionally, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they do not make sure that pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress.
- Teachers have too few opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, including two observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and managers and with three governors, including the vice-chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and performance management information. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the School Improvement Adviser's reports were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered 25 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nina Heron

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement, especially in reading at Key Stage 2, so that achievement overall become outstanding by ensuring that:
 - pupils are consistently challenged so that they always make the best possible progress
 - pupils in Key Stage 2 are given more challenging books and reading materials, including in individual and small group reading session with an adult
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools to enable them to further improve their skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school in Reception with skills and knowledge that are generally well below those expected for their age, although this profile has increased recently. They make very good progress in the Reception Year and enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are close to average.
- Pupils do well during Key Stage 1. In recent years standards have been rising and are now above average in reading and writing and around average in mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now typically above average. Pupils' progress has improved steadily and they make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement from pupils' starting points. However, although it is good, progress in reading is not as strong as in writing and mathematics.
- There was a fall in pupils' standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013. However, these results are not typical. All pupils achieved well, and those pupils with complex needs in this year group made very good progress and achieved well from their different starting points.
- The school's detailed tracking information shows that all groups of pupils are currently making good progress across the school, whatever their starting points. This is confirmed by inspection evidence from lesson observations and from work in pupils' books. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve above average standards and to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and they receive good support to help them learn from skilled teachers and teaching assistants and the learning mentor. As a result, they achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- The most able pupils make good progress over time because they are given work that stretches them and enables them to reach their potential.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve well from the varied starting points. They make more rapid progress than other pupils because they receive effective small-group and individual support whenever it is needed. Test results at the end of 2013 showed that the standards of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in reading, writing and mathematics was around two terms behind that of other pupils, although this gap is closing quickly.
- Pupils' writing skills are well developed and have improved since the previous inspection because of better teaching. Pupils write effectively in a variety of styles in different subjects across the curriculum.
- Pupils have well-developed mathematical skills. They can apply and use these skills well to solve problems in real situations.
- Teachers make sure that pupils read regularly and have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check has been above average for the last two years.
- However, at Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement in reading is not as strong as in writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils make good progress in reading because they are not always given books and reading materials that are challenging enough to extend their skills, including in individual or small group reading sessions with an adult.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good across the school with much that is outstanding. The work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress due to typically good teaching over time.
- Teachers know pupils very well and there are strong relationships between pupils and their

teachers. Teachers usually have high expectations of pupils and mostly plan work that motivates and engages pupils so they learn quickly. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, are keen to do well and enjoy their lessons.

- In an English lesson, for example, Year 2 pupils worked enthusiastically to write a descriptive poem in a style of their choice. The teacher used questioning very skilfully to reinforce previous learning and check progress, and made sure that all pupils, including the most able, had challenging targets that made them think hard about what they were doing. As a result, the pupils greatly enjoyed the lesson and made outstanding progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very strong. Teachers make sure that learning is purposeful and well matched to children's varying levels of development. There is a good balance between activities led by the teacher and activities chosen by the children themselves. As a result, children make very good progress.
- On occasions, where pupils' progress is not as strong, work is not sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to learn as much as they could.
- Sometimes in Key Stage 2, pupils are not always given books and reading materials that are challenging enough to enable them to make the best possible progress in enhancing their reading skills.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They use praise effectively and give helpful comments and suggestions for the next steps in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, and there is clear evidence that they respond to their teachers' comments.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support those pupils who find learning more difficult. They use a range of strategies successfully either within lessons or in individual or small group sessions. This includes pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress and any gaps in achievement are closing quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They get on very well with each other and with adults in the school and are very polite and considerate. This creates an extremely positive climate for learning. There is a very strong and caring ethos throughout the school.
- Pupils show high levels of engagement and motivation in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and try their best to succeed. As a result, lessons proceed very smoothly with no interruptions to learning.
- Pupils behave very well during break times. They play enthusiastically and safely together and behave very responsibly in the school hall at lunchtime.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of it. One pupil described the school as 'brilliant' and one parent said that her daughter 'would come to school at 7am in the morning if she could'. As a result, attendance has risen and is now above average.
- School records show that poor behaviour is extremely rare and that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. There have been no exclusions and no instances of racist or discriminatory behaviour in recent years.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school and are very well cared for. They know very clearly how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including e-safety when using the internet. They have an extremely good knowledge of different types of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say there is no bullying in school at present, and are very confident that it would be sorted out quickly if it occurred.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey agreed unanimously that their children are happy and feel safe at school, and that they are well looked after and behave well. Inspection evidence supports this.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school and is strongly supported by the senior leadership team and middle leaders. Since the previous inspection their actions have improved the quality of teaching, and this has led to a rise in pupils' achievement.
- There is very strong support for the school shown in the parent and staff questionnaires. There is a calm, orderly, committed and happy atmosphere throughout the school.
- School leaders at all levels, including governors, make good use of information about pupils' progress and achievement. They have a very clear view of the strengths of the school and where it could be improved further.
- The school improvement plan correctly identifies the key priorities for development and is firmly focused on further improving teaching and raising achievement. Leaders are aware that progress in reading at Key Stage 2 is not as strong as in writing and mathematics, and there are clear plans in place to address this.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and middle leaders effectively check and evaluate pupils' performance in their areas. Any underachievement is addressed by providing pupils with extra help when they need it. As a result, all groups of pupils in the school are making good progress and any gaps in achievement are closing. This shows the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities.
- Information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is used to check how well teachers perform, and is used to identify where further training or support is needed and when making decisions about teachers' pay.
- While teaching is good, it is not yet outstanding overall. There is outstanding teaching in the school, and staff work well to share this best practice. However, there could be more opportunities for them to observe outstanding teaching in other schools to enable them to further improve their skills.
- The curriculum is good and provides an imaginative range of activities that encourage pupils' creative thinking and problem solving. It engages pupils very effectively in their learning and promotes excellent behaviour. There is a good range of enrichment for all pupils, including clubs, trips and visits covering sport, music, drama and cultural activities, including residential trips such as a recent visit to London by Year 6 pupils. This contributes to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The new primary school sports funding is being used effectively to improve teachers' skills and to extend the range of physical education activities within the school. A specialist teaching assistant teaches lessons, trains staff and runs after-school clubs, and a local dance company teaches dance to all pupils. This is having a positive effect on pupils' physical well-being and lifestyles.
- The local authority has provided effective support for this school in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise attendance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where it could do better. Governors are fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school. They know how to analyse and interpret data about pupils' achievement and progress. As a result, they ask searching questions, challenge the school effectively, and hold leaders to account. Governors set challenging targets and ensure that pupils' performance is considered when making decisions about the pay of teachers and teaching assistants. They ensure that the school's finances are well managed, and know how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having. Governors make sure that they meet all statutory requirements, including those related to safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119134
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	439585

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Moat
Headteacher	Linda Pye
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
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