

Inspection of a good school: Willowbrook Primary School

Rosen Crescent, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex CM13 2TU

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

Willowbrook Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Each working for all' reflects the welcoming ethos of Willowbrook Primary. Pupils enjoy attending school and do so regularly. They work hard in their lessons. Pupils strive to reach the high expectations staff have. This helps them to achieve well. They are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Pupils benefit from the range of well-considered enrichment opportunities the school provides. Various educational visits help pupils to learn more about the topics they study in class. They value new experiences such as zooming along the zip wire during their Year 6 residential trip. Representing the school at sporting competitions is important to pupils. They wear the school badge with pride at events such as cricket festivals or netball rallies.

There are many ways pupils learn to be responsible. Elected leadership roles, such as school councillors or house captains, give pupils chances to have a voice in the school. House captains relish supporting others in their house during sports day. Responsibility becomes instilled in older pupils. They proactively support younger pupils to play games during lunchtime. This helps build the close community that exists within the school.

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

The school has identified the important knowledge pupils need to understand. It has broken this knowledge down into small steps and ordered it logically. This helps pupils to build on their understanding over time. Some curriculums are newer than others. There are several subject leaders who are new to post. These subject leaders are beginning to build a picture of where they might need to make improvements. The school understands the importance of supporting these leaders to develop their knowledge and understanding of how well pupils learn in their respective subjects.

Staff typically have the subject knowledge they need to teach effectively. Generally, staff provide work that is well matched to pupils' understanding. This helps pupils apply their existing knowledge to new concepts. For example, staff ensure children in the Reception

Year have a secure understanding of numbers before introducing new content. This helps children to apply their knowledge successfully when adding numbers together to solve more complex problems. Sometimes, staff set pupils complex work before they have secured the important building blocks of knowledge they need to access it. Equally, sometimes, staff set work that is too easy and this does not deepen pupils' understanding as well as it might.

Reading is a crucial part of the school day. Books and stories permeate the early years curriculum. The school uses precise checks to identify how well pupils can read. This helps teachers ensure pupils read books that match their needs. Well-trained staff support pupils who find reading hard. They help pupils to sound out unfamiliar words. As a result, pupils become more confident and fluent. Many pupils read widely and often. Incentives, such as winning a book from the reading vending machine, motivate pupils to read at home.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know how to support pupils with SEND. They make careful adaptations to their teaching to help pupils access the curriculum. For example, children in the early years benefit from having the letters of the alphabet in large font during phonics lessons. This helps them when they come to blend sounds together to read new words.

Expectations and routines for positive behaviour are set from the moment children start in the Reception Year. Children rise to these. They quickly become independent and confident learners. The school sets high expectations of attendance. Staff are tenacious at supporting pupils to attend school regularly. The school supports families to remove any potential barriers to pupils attending school. As a result, attendance is high for most pupils.

The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum teaches pupils how to manage their emotions and feelings. It also teaches pupils what makes a healthy relationship. Pupils have a secure understanding of this. They also understand why their school values are important. They show these values in how they conduct themselves throughout the school day.

Governors support and hold the school to account. They have the expertise and knowledge to do this effectively. Governors' monitoring identifies how well the school is addressing school development priorities. This helps governors to check that leaders' actions are having a positive impact on pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some instances when staff provide work for pupils before they are ready. When this happens, pupils do not have the building blocks of knowledge they need to move on. There are also occasions when staff do not provide work that enables pupils to deepen their understanding of existing knowledge. The school should ensure staff have the ongoing training and guidance they need to ensure work is well matched to what pupils need. This is so pupils either secure or deepen their understanding of important knowledge.
- Some subject leaders are starting to understand how well pupils are learning. This means these leaders are developing their understanding of where they need to make improvements. The school should ensure subject leaders get the ongoing training and guidance they need to check how well pupils are learning. This is so subject leaders better understand where they might need to make necessary improvements.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2019.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115041
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323617
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Fryer
Headteacher	Clare Branton
Website	www.willowbrook.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school works in collaboration with two other schools as part of the 'Like-Minded Partnership'.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club as childcare provision for pupils on site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, subject leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He also listened to pupils read with a familiar member of staff.

- The inspector met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum information and looked at samples of pupils' work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of documents were considered, including: behaviour logs; bullying records; attendance records; pupil records; minutes of governing body meetings; governor monitoring records; local authority visit notes; records of visits from external school improvement partners; school development plans; and school policies.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. He also took account of responses to both the Ofsted pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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