

# The Willows School

Stipularis Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 9QB

## Inspection dates

21–22 September 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, strongly supported by his deputy, provides exceptional leadership, and the school has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- Staff and governors share their vision and contribute to the school's success.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They attend regularly, feel safe and want to learn.
- Pupils make good progress academically as well as in their behaviour and personal development.
- Pupils learn to take more responsibility for their own actions and to behave well because they know what is expected of them.
- Pupils are not making as much progress in mathematics as they are in English.
- In addition to current information, the school website contains much out-of-date information. This makes it harder for parents to know what is relevant to their children's education
- The governors provide a good balance of challenge and support. They know what is needed for the school to continue to improve.
- Teaching is good because staff have consistently high expectations. This gives pupils confidence that they can achieve well.
- Good training and support helps staff to improve their skills.
- The school's values reflect British values of fair play, the rule of law and democracy.
- Surveys of parents' views show that they think their children do well at school.
- Teaching assistants are not always given enough guidance on how best to support the pupils they work with.
- Teachers' questioning does not always probe pupils' understanding enough.

## **Full report**

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

- Building on the knowledge and skills available within the school, further improve teaching and the rate of progress of pupils through:
  - ensuring that the guidance given to teaching assistants enables them to support the pupils as effectively in all classes as they do in some
  - developing staff skills further so that they use questions more effectively to check pupils' understanding and move them on to the next steps.
- Raise attainment and increase the rate of progress in mathematics by:
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use and practise their mathematical knowledge and skills through problem-solving and work in other subjects such as geography, history and science
  - raising the profile of the subject in the school.
- Ensure that the school website contains only the most up-to-date information so that parents know what applies to their children and can use it to support them more effectively

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. His aim is to see that the school provides its pupils with a high-quality education which is the equal of the best mainstream schools.
- The partnership with the deputy headteacher is strong. They know where the school is doing well and where weaknesses still remain. With the support of staff, the governing body and parents, they have translated their vision for the school into clear action plans with appropriate targets.
- Effective and regular checking of teaching and learning across the school is resulting in better learning and progress. More pupils are reaching standards which are similar to their peer group in mainstream schools.
- Until recently, the main focus has been on improving the teaching of reading and writing. The positive impact of support and training from senior managers and the subject leader is evident in higher standards in both areas.
- School and subject leaders have identified mathematics as an area which needs improvement, and their work is already having an impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Regular checking of the work in pupils' books and the quality of marking and feedback, in line with the school policy, is ensuring a high degree of consistency across the school. This is helping pupils to make better progress.
- Teachers know that they will be supported to improve their skills through well-targeted professional development. All staff have objectives that are linked to school priorities and expectations for pupils' progress.
- The special educational needs provision for individual pupils is carefully monitored and adjusted to make sure that it meets their needs. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is well targeted so that these pupils receive the support they need and are also able to participate fully in the life of the school.
- The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to meet pupils' needs and the impact of this can be seen in the higher standards, good attendance and good attitudes to learning.
- Almost all pupils are entitled to support from the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, and leaders ensure that they make good progress, with a small proportion making exceptional progress.
- The additional sports funding is used to help provide a wider range of activities than might otherwise be possible in a small school, as well as training for staff to improve their skills in teaching sport. Pupils are enthusiastic and make the most of the opportunities.
- Pupils are encouraged to take part in a variety of extra-curricular clubs over the year. They particularly liked cookery and the chance to learn kung fu. A range of visitors and visits extends pupils' experience well.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through music, art, sport and drama. Mutual respect and good

relationships between pupils and adults help to promote British values such as tolerance, democracy and the rule of law.

- The school is genuinely inclusive in approach and strongly promotes equality of opportunity. It is developing links with primary and secondary schools to enable pupils wherever possible to move to mainstream school.
- Relationships with parents are good. Though few parents completed the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), the school's own surveys are positive. Most parents felt that their children are happy at school, feel safe and make good progress. The school website provides the legally required range of information, but out-of-date information has also been left on it. This makes it harder for parents to support their children, for example through knowing what they will be studying next in different subjects.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has benefited from an external review and good support from external advisers and the partnership with Swakeleys School. Governors have a clear understanding of their role in monitoring and holding the school to account while still being very supportive. They have a good grasp of data and, as a result, they are now challenging the school more effectively. Governors understand the system of performance management for teachers and that pay and progression are linked to the quality of teaching. The governing body also ensures that the school uses the pupil premium and sports funding to good effect.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors have regular training in safeguarding and very aware of their responsibilities. Work in personal, social and health education is carefully planned to ensure that pupils begin to understand issues around racism and the risks of extremism at a level appropriate to their age and maturity.
- The school website provides appropriate information on safeguarding for parents.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now consistently good. Some teaching is outstanding, but this is not enough to make sure that pupils make outstanding progress. Senior staff check regularly on the quality of teaching and provide good support and training to help teachers improve their skills.
- Skilful planning of lessons makes sure that the resources and the work are well matched to pupils' individual special educational needs. Classes are usually working on the same topic but the individual tasks are designed to help each pupil succeed.
- The work builds well on what pupils already know, which gives them confidence and encourages them to try hard. For example, in the key stage 1 class, pupils made very good progress in addition and subtraction. The most-able were confidently using the inverse operation to check whether their answers were correct.
- Classes are well organised and managed. Pupils know how they are expected to behave. Teachers use the reward system very effectively to motivate pupils and support learning.

- Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They check the quality of pupils' work in their books and give them good feedback on how well they are doing in different subjects. They set challenging but achievable targets.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons and the most effective questioning helps them to move pupils on to the next steps. Sometimes, though, the questioning is not probing enough to ensure that pupils fully understand.
- Across the school, teachers have consistently high expectations for standards of presentation and as a result pupils take a real pride in their work.
- Reading has been a major focus for staff training and as a result, it is well taught across the school. Pupils learn to read confidently and to enjoy books and stories. They use their phonics knowledge when they meet unfamiliar words.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and work well in lessons. They do not, however, have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solving problems or in other subjects such as geography, history and science. Mathematics does not have as high a profile as English in the displays around the school.
- Teaching assistants provide useful support, and when given good direction by the class teacher, their support helps pupils to make very rapid progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson in a key stage 2 class, teaching assistants knew exactly what to do to support pupils very effectively. However, sometimes the teaching assistants are less sure about what to do and pupils make slower progress.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards learning, which helps them to make good progress.
- Pupils look smart and wear their school uniform with pride, in some cases not even wanting to remove their blazers or jumpers on the hottest of days!
- Staff work hard to build pupils' confidence. They give pupils opportunities to work successfully in teams, for example taking part in inter-school sport and in whole-school activities such as 'British Science Week', 'World Book Day' and 'Black History Month', as well as fun events for charity such as 'Sports Relief'.
- Pupils have opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school. For example, each year the school council is given £1,500 to spend. The funds are shared across classes and pupils have to decide how to spend the money in ways which are related to what they are learning.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that bullying is not a problem but, if there is any, it will be sorted out. They say that staff are quick to spot potential issues, for example in the playground, and deal with them promptly.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has a range of approaches which help pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour. Adults' expectations are consistent and pupils respond well because they know what these expectations are. Pupils know how the system of rewards and sanctions works.
- Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors and generally behave well in lessons and around school. When individual pupils are having difficulties, incidents are well managed and not allowed to disrupt the education of other pupils.
- Parents are positive about the way the school manages behaviour. They also feel that their children are safe in school.
- Pupils' attendance generally improves when they join the school and attendance levels are similar to the national figures for primary schools.

## **Outcomes for pupils**

**Good**

- The evidence from lessons and books shows that current pupils in all year groups make good progress.
- Group sizes are small, so it is difficult to make comparisons with national results or evaluate trends. Good in-class and withdrawal support is targeted and adjusted as necessary to meet individual needs. This helps pupils of all abilities, including the most able, to achieve well.
- In 2016, pupils in Year 6 achieved results which were broadly in line with the national results in reading and writing. This means that they made much better than expected progress, particularly in writing.
- School records show good progress in all year groups in key stage 1, though results were below national expectations for the end of Year 2 and in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Results were below the national expectations in mathematics, but for most pupils this was still good progress from a low starting point. Pupils do not have as many opportunities to practise using their mathematical skills as they do their literacy skills.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and most become competent readers who are able to read with some expression and explain what they are reading. Their writing skills have improved and they learn to write at length and for a wide variety of purposes. For example, they have produced some very good work in history and science as well as in English.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff work hard to make the transition to a new class or a new school as smooth as possible.

## School details

Unique reference number	137652
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	10019677

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victoria Rutter
Headteacher	Malcolm Shaw
Telephone number	02088417176
Website	<a href="http://www.thewillowsschoolacademy.co.uk">www.thewillowsschoolacademy.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@willows.hillingdon.sch.uk">office@willows.hillingdon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 November 2014

## Information about this school

- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish as some material on the website is out of date.
- The Willows is very small special school for children with social, emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan.
- There are no children in the early years foundation stage on roll.
- Almost all pupils are entitled to support through the pupil premium.
- About half the pupils are White British in origin, with Black Caribbean pupils forming the next largest group. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The governing body currently has an acting chair. The governors and leadership team are supported by Swakeleys School, which is an outstanding academy in the area.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classes during the inspection at least twice. Most of the observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed the breakfast club, morning breaks and lunchtime.
- A meeting was held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspectors also listened to a number of pupils reading in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The inspection team met governors, and the lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's external adviser.
- Inspectors held meetings with a number of school staff, including the subject leaders in English and mathematics.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own surveys of parents and spoke informally with a number of parents.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on progress; school improvement planning; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; an external adviser's checks on the quality of education; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

### Inspection team

Grace Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janet Hallett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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