

Inspection of Willow Tree Primary School

2 Greenland Street, Salford, Lancashire M6 5TJ

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school are polite, charismatic and friendly. They readily welcome visitors and confidently engage others in thoughtful conversation. Pupils relish their education and their experience of school life. Their happiness shines through in the enthusiastic, friendly and purposeful atmosphere.

The school is focused and driven in its desire to offer pupils a high-quality education as their gateway to a successful future. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet the school's high aspirations for both academic achievement and in flourishing socially.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are extremely proud of their school. Pupils, and children in the early years, reflect this in their highly positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils relish being at school. Their calm conduct around school shows high levels of self-management. Pupils want to follow the school rules. Many do so independently.

Pupils benefit from the thoughtfully considered programme to support their personal development. They learn about how to stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils are considerate and respectful of others who may have different backgrounds to their own. Pupils can take part in a range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests such as art, board games and cookery clubs.

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

The school has carefully set out the order in which pupils learn curricular content from the beginning of the Nursery Year to the end of Year 6. Many pupils build a rich body of knowledge through the course of their studies. Over time, pupils make strong progress from typically low starting points.

In the main, teachers have the right information and expertise to deliver the curriculum as the school intends. Pupils typically learn well. This includes pupils with SEND, who benefit from the school's effective approach to identifying areas of need and prioritising support. However, the school has not gone far enough in identifying the key knowledge and skills that pupils should gain in handwriting. The school has set out a progressive overview, but, sometimes, staff are unclear about the specific information that they should teach pupils to help them to become competent and fluent writers.

Typically, staff check that pupils are learning the intended curriculum. This is particularly true in the effective practice for early reading. However, occasionally, staff do not address mistakes that pupils make in their written work, notably in spelling, grammar and punctuation content. This means that a small number of pupils continue to make avoidable errors in their written work. Overall, staff successfully evaluate pupils' knowledge base prior to introducing any new learning. This ensures that pupils build on what they already know and can do.

The school places reading front and centre of its curriculum. From the start of the Nursery Year, children spend quality time engaging in key texts. They practise the pre-reading skills that they will need for when they start to learn the phonics code. Children in the Reception Year make a swift start to learning to read. Staff teach them well, with many pupils being fluent and competent readers by the time that they finish Year 2. The school quickly identifies any pupils who struggle to learn to read. It gives these pupils the help that they need to catch up in learning key reading knowledge. Pupils throughout the school appreciate and enjoy reading the wide range of texts available to them.

Pupils model exemplary behaviours. They are true advocates for their school. Pupils are respectful and courteous. There is a sense of companionship throughout the school. During lunch times, older pupils sit with younger pupils to support them and to enjoy amiable conversation. From the early years, children quickly learn and follow clear routines which promote their independence. Pupils are excited to learn. They are resilient and reflective.

Over recent years, the school has significantly reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Attendance is an extremely high priority. The school is effective in keeping attendance at the forefront of everyone's minds. It provides appropriate, successful support for families.

The school's programme for personal development helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. The school is ambitious for pupils' future success. For example, older pupils study engineering at the nearby university to inspire them to excel in their own education. Pupils are encouraged to be active members of the community, such as by raising money for charity and singing in a local care home.

Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school's strengths and development priorities. Their reflective and analytical approach helps them to provide effective challenge and support. The school is highly supportive of staff's well-being. It supports staff to manage their workload when changes are introduced.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, spelling and grammatical errors in pupils' work go unchecked. Additionally, a small number of pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to correct these mistakes. This means that some pupils do not have a secure enough grasp of spelling, grammar or punctuation principles and carry misconceptions over time. The school should ensure that staff identify and address these misunderstandings to enable pupils to convey the content of their writing more effectively.

- Some pupils have not been taught the correct letter formation or transcription practices, leading to a lack of automaticity in their writing. This hinders their ability to become effective writers and to create legible pieces of writing across the curriculum. The school should further refine the key transcriptional knowledge that pupils learn, including in the early years, and develop staff expertise to deliver the practice of handwriting effectively.

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	136079
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10348260
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Beth Myring
Headteacher	Ros Munro
Website	www.willowtreeprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	6 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, science and art and design. They met with subject leaders and with teachers. Inspectors visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They met with leaders, looked at documentation and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils during meetings, lessons and at break times. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.

Inspection team

Sheena Clark, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Pars

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024