

# Inspection of a good school: The Willows School

Stipularis Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 9QB

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Inspection dates:

5 and 6 July 2022

## Outcome

The Willows School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this school. The enthusiasm displayed by pupils and staff is infectious. Pupils are extremely happy, feel safe and thoroughly enjoy their learning.

Pupils join The Willows School because of previous difficult school experiences. Many have had long periods away from school. Consequently, when they arrive, many display some challenging behaviours. However, caring staff who know the pupils well mean that unwanted behaviour rarely affects anyone's learning. Pupils understand what bullying is and say that it rarely happens in their school. They say adults help to resolve issues if pupils fall out. Pupils feel confident to share their worries with adults and know that the staff care about them.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values. Staff respect their choices. For example, when the school council identified a need to make the playground happier, an outside buddy sofa was set up.

Every school day ends with an uplifting singing assembly. Pupils go home with a feeling of belonging and self-worth. When called, pupils leave the assembly for the walking bus. This provides opportunities for pupils to learn about independent travel on their journey home. It also ensures a calm end to the day.

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

The headteacher has an unwavering determination to provide the very best learning experiences for all pupils. This is shared by all leaders and staff, and accomplished with skill and passion. Leadership is inspiring, and highly motivating for staff and pupils. There is a remarkable sense of teamwork among staff, in a supportive atmosphere.

Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for pupils. The aim is for each pupil to leave The Willows ready to thrive in secondary school.

The curriculum is tailored around each pupil's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the small steps of knowledge for pupils to learn. The curriculum introduces pupils to this knowledge in a logical way. Pupils are helped to know and remember more because teachers make learning as practical as possible. For example, when learning about chocolate in science, pupils made their own chocolate from cocoa pods. Leaders have developed systems that closely check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Teachers have a detailed understanding of how each pupil is developing.

Reading is a high priority. Pupils confidently apply their phonic knowledge when reading. They are provided with books to read that match the sounds they are learning at school. Pupils develop a love of reading right from the start. Teachers' passion for reading has a very positive influence on pupils, who 'catch' their enthusiasm. Pupils develop as confident, fluent readers of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. The reading curriculum has a very positive influence on the quality of pupils' writing.

There is a consistent approach to teaching mathematics. Pupils are confident and independent in selecting ways of working out calculations. They give clear explanations and reasons for their work. Teachers address misconceptions quickly. They provide pupils with problems and challenges. Pupils use these tasks to show what they understand, can do and can apply to different situations.

Pupils' personal development is carefully considered. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to stay physically and emotionally safe, and the diverse society in which they live. They are genuinely interested in the views of others and talk about their feelings freely. Where pupils begin to struggle with their behaviour, staff get them back on track quickly and kindly, so there is no disruption to the learning of other pupils.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They receive extensive professional development and are appreciative of this. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and that the school is well managed. Relationships between staff members are strong, and they provide effective support for one another, particularly when dealing with challenging behaviour.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the school and its leadership. One parent expressed the view shared by many: 'This school and its staff are amazing. They make us feel like one big family.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain a strong culture of safeguarding. Governors prioritise safeguarding and ensure it is well resourced. Safeguarding is a high priority as a result. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive regular training that underpins the

school's safeguarding culture. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a regular feature of staff briefings and newsletters.

Staff develop very positive and trusting relationships with pupils based on mutual respect and understanding. They work closely with parents and other professionals, including social care teams from eight London boroughs. This ensures that even the most vulnerable pupils and their families receive a coordinated package of support to help them keep safe.

## 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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137652
<b>Local authority</b>	Hillingdon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200081
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	59
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing</b>	Mr John Knight
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Malcolm Shaw
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thewillowsschoolacademytrust.co.uk">www.thewillowsschoolacademytrust.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 – 22 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- All pupils in this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. Pupils have a wide range of needs including autism spectrum disorder, and social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, and one member of the governing body. They also spoke with a school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and economic education. This involved visiting lessons with subject

leaders, discussing curriculum thinking, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at pupils' work.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They also talked to pupils to find out about their views of the school.
- The views of staff, parents and pupils were gathered through their informal discussions with inspectors. Inspectors also considered nine responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. There were 20 responses to the staff survey and nine replies to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked leaders' safeguarding procedures. They viewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding concerns.

### **Inspection team**

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Brinkley

Ofsted Inspector

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