

# Willow Tree Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	136079
<b>Local authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	382023
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	474
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alma McGinn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ros Munro
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not applicable
<b>School address</b>	2 Greenland Street Salford M6 5TJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons, taught by 17 teachers. They conducted meetings with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body and held a discussion with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at records of pupils' progress since the school opened and evaluated samples of the pupils' work. They scrutinised questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and 98 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The current rate of progress to establish whether or not there are differences between progress in subjects and/or groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum and its effectiveness in challenging pupils and ensuring that their needs are fully met.
- Whether the school's arrangements for promoting community cohesion are effective in widening pupils' views of the diversity in society.
- How effectively the leaders and managers monitor the school's performance and identify areas for its improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. A below average percentage of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages including those learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools status.

The school was opened as a new building in September 2010 in order to amalgamate three primary schools into one. All teaching and support staff took up post in September 2010; the headteacher had spent 2009/10 setting up the school and appointing staff. The deputy headteacher took up post in April 2010. A permanent governing body was established in March 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Willow Tree is a good school. Since it opened, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to successfully create a skilled teaching team which sets high expectations for pupils and provides good quality care and support. As a result both achievement and enjoyment are good. Children have a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. After starting school with skills that are below typical for their age, pupils make good progress to reach average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils possess good personal qualities emanating from good levels of spiritual, moral and social development. Behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of the choices needed to be safe and healthy. Whilst pupils are proud of their school and value the respect received from staff, their voice is not yet given enough priority.

Pupils learn well because of the good quality of teaching. Outstanding leadership of teaching has in a very short time succeeded in bringing staff together from three different schools into a new school to provide good and improving teaching which is ambitious and skilful. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the guidance of accomplished teaching assistants and make good strides towards their individual targets. Teaching engages pupils well and assesses their progress accurately. Pupils are increasingly mastering the skill of assessing their own achievement but are not consistently involved in setting longer-term targets for their work. The curriculum has many good features but is still in the process of being developed to widen pupils' experience and understanding of diversity within society.

Attainment is broadly average overall but is not as high in mathematics as in English. This is primarily because in mathematics fewer pupils are reaching the higher levels. In writing, attainment, whilst within the national average, is lower than it is in reading. The school is taking concerted action to close any gaps in performance between groups, for example, girls and boys.

Value for money is good because outcomes are good. The headteacher has a crystal clear vision and has established a good track record for raising attainment and improving progress. The confidence of parents and carers has been gained, and productive relationships formed with a variety of agencies. Effective systems for monitoring the school's performance inform the school's accurate self-evaluation. The positive direction within the school and the good quality of education that has been quickly established demonstrates its good capacity to improve.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics and writing by:
  - increasing the proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in writing and mathematics to more closely match that of reading
  - increasing the pupils' involvement in their own assessment so that they understand their longer-term targets for improvement.
  
- Refine and develop the curriculum so that it:
  - further develops the school's plans to link subjects together
  - widens pupils' understanding of the diversity within society
  - provides more opportunities for pupils to be involved in pursuing their own interests and to have a stronger voice in other aspects of school life.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well because of the stimulating lessons they receive. Behaviour is good and at times outstanding in lessons because pupils respond well to encouragement to share their ideas and to interact with classmates to solve problems. They enjoyed, for example, exploring their understanding of magnetism by familiarising themselves with different shapes of magnets then experimenting to discover which was the strongest. Learning is good, with occasional outstanding examples, such as when pupils were totally engaged in exploring a hundred number square by simple role play. Pupils were riveted to the task that followed in which they worked with a classmate using dice to add or take away one or 10. The pace of learning drops occasionally in a few lessons when, for example, pupils listen for too long rather than get into activities. High quality work in samples of pupils' books demonstrate the pride that pupils take in their work, but some boys reported that their interest wanes in writing when tasks in some topics are, in their view, rather mundane.

There is no long-term record of attainment or progress as the school has been opened for just a year. Inspection evidence shows that the good learning observed in lessons coupled with robust data provided by the school demonstrates good progress. The unvalidated national tests for Year 6 in 2011 indicate that attainment was broadly average. Measures taken since the school's formation to increase progress in reading have been effective. More recent initiatives are also accelerating progress in writing and mathematics although attainment in these subjects remains lower than in reading. The school is aware of the relatively lower attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. A clear focus on improving the performance of this group of pupils is successfully improving their progress and raising their attainment.

Pupils feel very safe in school because bullying is rare and effectively managed if it should occur. Levels of attendance are average and improving; pupils covet their silver badge presented for good attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and are adamant that the school encourages healthy ways of living; some admitted that they do not always transfer this knowledge to their home life. The excellent outdoor play facilities in the school coupled with extended

playtimes encourage pupils to take regular exercise, manage risk and explore their physical boundaries. The pupils respond well to the school's ethos of collaboration. Initiatives such as introducing 'family' style eating at lunchtimes and the dedication of staff who eat with the pupils add to a strong sense of community. Pupils all respect and value any differences in their cultures but their knowledge of diversity in society is only satisfactory. Many have opinions about how school could be even better, but systems for pupils to influence school planning are not yet effective enough. Given the good social skills and determination to learn and improve, coupled with their good quality personal skills, pupils are well prepared for taking advantage of their next stage of education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching has a good effect on learning because lessons are based on careful assessments of each pupil. As a result lessons are usually pitched at the right level to meet the needs of most pupils. In the vast majority of cases, pupils are inspired to work hard and enjoy the opportunities to work with classmates and share ideas. Teaching assistants lead groups well. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good support with reading and in developing their speech and language skills. Successful lessons make good use of new technology to explain ideas and give time for pupils to discuss and share their thoughts. A clear policy for marking is being implemented but there remain missed opportunities for learning because pupils are not always aware of longer-term targets for their improvement.

The curriculum emphasises the basic skills in English and mathematics well. There is strong support for pupils falling behind in reading. Ambitious plans are being put into place to create a vibrant and inspiring approach to learning by linking subjects together and involving pupils closely in pursuing their own interests. Close links with the Lowry Arts Centre has enabled some pupils to explore art and sculpture but the overall planning for the arts is not yet fully developed. Residential trips and visitors

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

into school add enrichment and enjoyment. Opportunities to explore global issues and to extend pupils' knowledge of the richness and diversity of modern society are not, as yet, fully exploited.

Strong teamwork between the family worker and learning mentors offers a good support to pupils and families and contributes to improving attendance. Very strong links with agencies from health, education and welfare benefit pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. The recently opened nurture facility enables pupils with emotional needs to receive good support should they need it. Effective systems induct pupils to school at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage and good strategies ease the transition of pupils when they move on to secondary education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's leadership is inspirational. Together with a very effective deputy headteacher a school has been created which has a strong identity and an ethos of care and support for the vulnerable, whilst also setting high academic expectations for all. Under the crystal clear vision of the headteacher, there is a buoyant spirit of ambition and drive amongst all staff which is driving the school forward rapidly and improving teaching in particular. Staff have adjusted very well to working with new colleagues, adopting a common approach to teaching and effectively using the high-quality resources available. Consequently, teaching is improving rapidly and has many consistently good elements. All staff are increasingly involved in conducting a variety of monitoring and evaluation exercises that give a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The day-to-day management of school life is supported by a high-quality administrative team. Governance is principled, well organised and forward-looking, but its recently gained permanent status means that it has not yet had time to have a full impact on school improvement.

Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The variations in pupils' progress are identified and the effective action taken is successfully narrowing the gaps. The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are good, as confirmed by every parent, carer or pupil that expressed a view during the inspection. The new building has excellent arrangements to promote safety and procedures for child protection are of a good quality. The school is dedicated to promoting community cohesion but it has yet to generate strong plans for developing pupils' knowledge of the cultural diversity beyond their locality. Parents and carers work in close partnership with the school. Excellent communication through the school website and the regularly updated blogs keeps everyone up to date and well informed.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Good leadership and management have ensured that the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is of a good quality. Most children start school with levels of development below those typical for their age and, for some, their personal development and aspects of speech and language are weaker. A strong ethos of care, good quality procedures for inducting new families and a safe and secure environment mean that children settle quickly and comfortably into each school day. Staff skilfully blend adult-led focussed tasks, for example, on sounds and letters, with an array of learning activities for children to choose from. As part of a role-play setting in a 'hospital', children easily sorted out who was the doctor, who was the ambulance driver and who was the secretary. In so doing, language was promoted as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are clearly happy. Most children make good progress. The proportion of children reaching age-expected levels of attainment by the end of Reception increases at a good rate. At the end of its first year as a setting, attainment was just below average by the start of Year 1.

Staff use assessment systems well to gain a clear idea of how well individual children are learning and developing. This tracking information indicates where to target activities and this ensures good support for particular needs, such as in communication and in personal development. Staff have identified a need to upgrade the quality of resources for outdoor learning although the best use is made of what exists. Parents and carers are welcome into the setting at the start of each day and they are very much valued partners in their children's education. Initiatives such as story and party sacks and regular newsletters coupled with staff being available for discussion have built up the trust of the community in the provision for their children.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire have wholly positive views of their children’s experiences. There is particularly high support for the openness and ease of accessibility of staff, a high regard held for the headteacher, and the day-to-day care provided for their children. The inspection findings support these views. A few parents and carers expressed some negative views. Concern was expressed about the safety risks outside school at the end of the day and some unease was expressed about the timing of lunch for some younger pupils. These views were shared with the school. The school shares concerns about parking issues and liaison with local police services is in place as well as pleas made to be more sensible in parking. The timing of lunch is set to enable younger pupils to benefit from eating with older ones as part of a family eating time, but the inspectors are convinced that any concerns will be taken seriously.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Willow Tree Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received **98** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 451 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	63	36	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	65	33	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	52	44	45	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	58	38	39	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	64	34	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	54	42	43	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	63	32	33	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	49	42	43	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	53	43	44	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	52	41	42	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	45	45	46	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	54	42	43	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	63	32	33	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Willow Tree Primary School, Salford, M6 5TJ**

My colleagues and I thoroughly enjoyed our two days inspecting your school. We were struck by the excellent leadership of your headteacher, the good quality of teaching, the range of facilities in your new building and the way you spoke about the interesting things that you do in it. You told us that you enjoy school, feel safe and secure and like your teachers and their assistants.

Your headteacher and all staff work tirelessly to make your school as good as it can be. You go to a good school, which has settled down very quickly since it was opened last year. There are some really good things about your school. The levels you attain in reading are a strength and good improvement is evident in mathematics. You are doing as well as all children nationally by the end of Key Stage 2 tests. You gave a real 'thumbs-up' to the way playtimes are organised and the family arrangements for lunchtimes. Those of you that find learning difficult benefit from good support and the nurture room is already helping some of you who need a bit of extra help. All this shows that the school provides good value for money.

We have asked your school to do a few important things to improve. Some aspects are not quite as good as the others: mathematics and boys' writing. These need to be improved to increase the number of you reaching Level 5. Also whilst we know you do many exciting things such as visiting the Lowry Centre, we feel that more needs to be done to plan your curriculum with more detail. This would widen your understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds. You reported that you would like a suggestion box so that your ideas can be given - we have asked that your voice is given more value.

You can all help by trying hard at all times and striving to attend every day.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne  
Lead inspector

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