

Willow Brook Primary School Academy

190 Church Road, Leyton, London, E10 7BH

Inspection dates 19 – 20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not high enough, though recent increases in rates of progress are helping most pupils catch up.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding and that of others remain in some classes and in some subjects.
- Teachers do not always give pupils work which matches their ability precisely enough.
- Some teachers do not always explain how pupils can improve their work and develop their skills clearly.
- Teachers do not ask a wide enough range of questions to help the more-able pupils to think more deeply about their work. As a result, too few of them reach the higher levels of achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have secured rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Teachers and support staff receive extensive and appropriate training. Leaders check that this training leads to improvements in the achievement of pupils.
- The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage leads to good progress for children and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils understand the clear values which the headteacher has introduced. Their good behaviour usually lives up to these values.
- Leaders and governors check that the school and the activities which they allow pupils to take part in are safe in a systematic and thorough manner.
- The curriculum helps broaden pupils' horizons, appreciate the rich culture on their doorstep in London and respect the beliefs of others.
- Governors provide effective and well-informed challenge to school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made observations in 15 lessons or parts of lessons. Most of these were conducted with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the Griffin Schools Trust and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, heard some of them read and looked at examples of their work.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, including 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also talked to a number of parents before school on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed break times, lunchtimes, the breakfast club and visited two assemblies.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, including records of governors' meetings, records of the monitoring of teaching, achievement information and documents related to behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- When the school was inspected in May 2014 it was deemed to require special measures. Pupils' achievement, teaching and leadership were found to be inadequate. The school's work to keep pupils safe was also found to be inadequate.
- After a considerable period of informal support, the school became a formal member of the Griffin Schools Trust in April 2015. There have also been a significant number of changes to staffing since the last inspection. The Headteacher has held his post since September 2014...
- Nearly all pupils belong to a diverse range of minority ethnic groups and about three quarters of them speak English as an additional language.
- This is a much larger than average primary school. The children in the Nursery attend on a part-time basis.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- Just under half of all pupils are deemed to be disadvantaged and entitled to additional funding. This is well above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club at the beginning of the day for between 50 and 60 pupils. It also provides 750 free places at extra-curricular clubs for its pupils.
- In 2014 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better and so that progress is sustained, raising standards for all groups of pupils by:
 - making sure pupils are given work which matches their abilities and extends their learning effectively
 - providing guidance to pupils which explains precisely how they can improve and how their progress will be checked
 - asking pupils questions which deepen their thinking and help more-able pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Further develop middle leaders' effectiveness at checking on the impact of their actions aimed at raising achievement and improving teaching.
- Ensure children understand how to make the most of the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the planned improvements to this area, to develop their skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and his senior team set high expectations for staff and pupils alike. They have communicated clear core values and held the school community closely to account for living up to them. They also lead by example in this regard. This has been crucial in securing the rapid improvements since the last inspection.
- Leaders use wide-ranging evidence to check on the impact of plans for improvement. They also check one another's evidence and seek the opinions of external partners to substantiate their evaluations. As a result they maintain an accurate and current picture of the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher has made good decisions about priorities for improvement. He has insisted on a relentless focus on improving the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics above all else. This has led to the upsurge in the pace of pupils' progress in recent months.
- Senior leaders have introduced more rigorous and extensive systems to check on pupils' progress. This is now allowing them to hold teachers more closely to account for their work and adapt plans to help weaker learners and those who are ready for more challenge. These systems provide those responsible with reliable information on which to base decisions about teachers' pay.
- Middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities well. Recently, they have begun to have a more substantial impact on raising achievement and improving teaching. However, there is more to be done to broaden their responsibilities for improving outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders have made sure parents are encouraged and supported to participate more fully as partners in pupils' learning. Staff who have particular responsibility for working with parents provide substantial, effective support to those who may benefit. This has been effective in enhancing equality of opportunity. Most parents appear to be supportive of the work of school leaders.
- The sharp focus on basic skills has been complemented by developments to the wider curriculum. The rapid pace of improvement expected by leaders has allowed them to bring forward plans to develop the curriculum further. It already offers a good breadth of exciting themes which are evident in the vibrant displays throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well catered for. Pupils develop a wide range of skills in art inspired by cultures which may otherwise be unfamiliar to them. Opportunities to appreciate classical literature have resulted in some pupils attempting to read more broadly for pleasure. Leaders have also placed a strong emphasis on giving pupils the chance to appreciate the many cultural opportunities which are on their doorstep in London.
- Leaders have secured improvements in pupils' progress. This is providing greater equality of opportunity for pupils. They have extended the range of opportunities for pupils to take up responsible roles within school. Many of these involve democratic processes. The clear values introduced by the headteacher are enabling pupils to appreciate the importance of rules and are effective at tackling discrimination. This work is preparing pupils well for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding procedures developed by leaders are rigorous and meet statutory requirements.
- Senior leaders carefully plan for the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. There is an effective balance of spending directly on support for the learning of individuals or groups and spending on resources aimed at ensuring equality of access to the curriculum. Leaders track the impact of this spending closely and gaps in achievement are narrowing as a result.
- The additional primary school sports funding has been used to increase participation in the sports clubs on offer. This has now increased to over 700 attendances in a recent week. The leader responsible for physical education has clear plans for the use of this funding to improve the curriculum.
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Griffin Schools Trust, along with other representatives, has a broad and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The Trust is providing strong and effective challenge and support to leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection because of the well-considered, motivating support and training governors have received from the academy trust. New governors have brought a wider range of skills and experience to the governing body. Governors have taken on new roles and are growing in confidence in these. The governing body has detailed and systematic plans for further development which match the school's priorities for improvement well.
 - Governors ask effective questions of leaders and seek a range of opportunities to gain a view of the school's work. This challenge has helped maintain the pace of school improvement. Governors have made sure that senior leaders have improved the work of the school to keep pupils safe and secure since the last inspection. They check that these improvements are being sustained and that

safeguarding policies are implemented. Governors understand the reasons for decisions about spending additional funding and make sure that teachers' pay is linked directly to their impact on pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils cooperate well with adults in lessons. Instances of low-level disruption are few. Pupils and parents say attitudes to learning have improved significantly so they are now good. However, teachers need to apply the behaviour policy scrupulously because some pupils need frequent encouragement and reminders to uphold the school's values.
- At play and during lunchtimes pupils get along well together. They told inspectors that instances of bullying are rare and they understand how to get help if needed. Some pupils have been given responsibilities and take these seriously. They understand why they have been chosen to do the job.
- The records which leaders keep of more serious behaviour incidents show that these are declining. The nature of these incidents is much less frequently related to behaviour of an aggressive or discriminatory nature. When they are, leaders act robustly but fairly to improve outcomes for all concerned. An example of this is the expectation that pupils take action to make up for serious mistakes they have made with their behaviour. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced significantly since the time of the last inspection. There have been no permanent exclusions.
- Pupils attending the free breakfast club behave well and are given a suitably healthy range of food to help them start their day.
- School leaders have checked up on attendance, recognising good attendance and challenging poorer attendance behaviour. As a result, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The premises are secure. Very clear information around the school explains the school's expectations and values about safety.
- Leaders make sure pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils spoken to knew that different types of bullying exist and could tell inspectors some steps they might take to stay safe while using the internet.
- Risks associated with the school premises and activities outside school are considered carefully. For example, it has been decided to use public transport for some school trips because leaders believe this helps pupils gain an understanding of safety.
- Procedures to check the suitability of adults working with children in the school are thorough and meet statutory requirements. Safeguarding training is current and kept under close review. Leaders are aware of the need to be alert to help any extremist or radicalising views which pupils may potentially be influenced by.
- The leaders responsible for safeguarding and the safeguarding governor have developed strong communications with other professionals and parents. This has improved outcomes for some of the more vulnerable pupils.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not good enough in all classes to secure good achievement. Where teaching has improved the most, a rapid increase in the rate of pupils' progress has followed.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and plan lessons which engage their interest. However, the work they set does not always match the abilities of all pupils. When this is the case progress slows and teachers need to work hard to keep pupils motivated. Support staff are usually effective in supporting weaker learners and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The improvements leaders have secured in checking on progress have led to support staff being held more closely to account. The progress of these pupils is gaining pace as a result.
- Pupils have their work marked regularly by teachers. This encourages them to persist with their learning. However, many comments in pupils' books do not explain precisely how work could be improved. During practical lessons teachers sometimes provide superficial guidance or encouragement rather than specific advice to help individual learners or groups. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they might.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are benefiting as well as other pupils from recent improvements in teaching. A sharp focus across the school on the teaching of grammar is helping them to make better progress with their writing.
- A systematic approach to reversing previous underachievement in reading is used to good effect and standards are rising as a result. Pupils understand the way this is intended to help them and more of them are reading widely and for pleasure. Teachers have rightly used homework to help extend the growing enthusiasm for reading among pupils beyond the school day.
- Teachers provide a broad range of opportunities for pupils to write with purpose and apply their mathematical skills. For example, following some work on *'The Iliad'*, pupils in Year 5 were challenged to write about what they would be prepared to 'fight' for.
- The quality of teachers' questions, although improving, does not always help more-able pupils think deeply enough about how their work could go from good to great. This means that some pupils capable of reaching the highest levels of attainment are not yet achieving as well as they could.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' work seen in their books and the school's own evidence from assessments indicate that most of them are catching up with levels of achievement expected for their age. Some pupils have made very rapid progress in recent months. For example, pupils in Year 6 are now on track to meet the government's current floor standards. At the beginning of the school year, less than one in ten of them were on track to do so. However, achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good in all classes. The rate of progress dips where the quality of teaching over time is not good.
- The school's current information indicates that the proportion of pupils on track to leave the Reception year with good levels of development is above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Checks on pupils' understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) carried out by teachers indicate that most pupils are on track to reach the expected standard in the current Year 1 classes.
- The school's own evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 have increased their rate of progress and are on track to reach levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which are in line with national norms. However, the proportion of pupils on track to reach the higher levels of attainment is still too low. The achievement of more-able pupils across the whole school is improving but is not good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language usually achieve as well as other pupils. Improvements in rates of progress for these pupils are broadly similar to that seen for others. This group constitutes the majority of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have made quicker progress since leaders introduced more robust systems to check how well they were being supported with their learning. Many of these pupils still have much ground to catch up as a result of previous underachievement.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding in Year 6 achieved as well as other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this was due to low attainment overall and they were about nine months behind the attainment of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps in achievement for pupils currently at the school are narrowing. However, this is not consistently rapid across the whole school and some gaps remain.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points which are lower than typical. Their speaking and listening skills are often particularly weak when they start school. Teachers check up on their progress regularly and make accurate assessments of their learning. This helps secure the good achievement in the setting which prepares children well for Year 1.
- Leaders have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. They have been helped by a consultant from the academy trust since the last inspection. This has resulted in rapid gains in the quality of teaching. A consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of early skills in reading, writing and mathematics is evident as a result.
- Activities offered to the children support learning well across the good curriculum, particularly indoors.
- The outdoor space is being developed further to provide a wider range of activities and possibilities for learning. Children are still rather unsure about how to use some of the current outdoor activities on offer to develop their skills.

- Children show consideration for one another and good attitudes to learning. There are well-established routines which enable children to take some responsibility for looking after the setting and one another.
- Procedures to check on the safety and security of the setting are robust.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138364
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	453154

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	635
Appropriate authority	The Griffin Schools Trust
Chair	Liz Lewis
Headteacher	Nick Watkiss
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 May 2014
Telephone number	02085391428
Email address	school@willowbrook.waltham.sch.uk

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