

Inspection of Willen Primary School

Beaufort Drive, Willen, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK15 9HN

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Willen pupils have many opportunities to develop their talents and interests. They participate in exciting extra-curricular activities such as den building, baking and football. Pupils hold valuable leadership roles. For example, the school council has recently worked with leaders to introduce more outdoor play and learning opportunities across the school.

Pupils feel safe and they behave well. They show high levels of respect for each other and for adults. Pupils willingly care for and help one other. Leaders make sure that the very occasional incidents of bullying are quickly addressed. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They work calmly and purposefully in their lessons. Pupils enjoy playing together at breaktimes in the extensive and beautifully maintained grounds. They appreciate the range of activities on offer at breaktimes, such as draughts games and music to dance to.

Leaders are ambitious both for pupils' academic and personal achievements. They communicate this vision successfully to parents and carers. For example, school videos, made by pupils and staff, are transmitted on the popular 'Willen Channel'. Parents are hugely supportive of the school. As one parent summed up, 'We feel we hit the jackpot with Willen.'

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

Provision for pupils' personal development is one of the school's many strengths. Parents understandably value this aspect of the school's work. Pupils' moral, social and cultural understanding is at the core of the curriculum. Pupils experience a wide range of visits, speakers, special events and activities in and out of school, including attending a national singing event. Pupils rightly value how everyone is included in their school community. They learn about a wide range of aspects of equality and diversity. Leaders help pupils to understand how harmful discrimination of any kind can be and that it is never tolerated.

Children get off to a strong start in Reception. This is underpinned by effective teaching of early reading. Leaders make sure that this strong focus on reading continues throughout the school. They have designed the reading curriculum so that pupils encounter a wide range of genres, themes and cultures. Early reading books are well matched to pupils' stages of learning. Children make a similarly secure start in learning mathematics in Reception. They explore numbers and how to group and represent them in a variety of ways. Throughout the early years, purposeful activities are used to reinforce learning. For example, teachers carefully build children's understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly through stories, discussion, diagrams and observation.

The curriculum is well designed and pupils learn a broad range of subjects. Leaders have carefully considered the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember. In most subjects, including reading and mathematics,

teachers have strong subject knowledge and present information clearly. They provide activities that enable pupils to build their knowledge and remember what they have learned. However, in a few other curriculum subjects, pupils are not building their knowledge quite as securely. This is because the work given to pupils is not well matched to the ambitious aims of the curriculum. It does not deepen their understanding.

Teachers gauge pupils' learning in a range of ways, which they then use to plan subsequent learning. In the core subjects, such as mathematics and reading, teachers make sure that pupils' knowledge builds securely on what they have previously learned, from early years through to Year 6. In a few subjects, teachers do not systematically check what pupils know. Consequently, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to revisit and consolidate important knowledge.

Staff are quick to accurately identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with complex needs are very well supported in all areas of learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support through small-group and individual sessions outside the classroom. However, when pupils with SEND return to the classroom, the learning is not always sufficiently well adapted to enable them to understand what is being taught.

Leadership is strong. Leaders, including local governors, are ambitious for all pupils. They rightly recognise that this ambition could have even more impact in practice, for example by making sure that the curriculum is even better adapted to meet the needs of every pupil. Leaders ensure that teachers' workload is manageable. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration for their welfare and they feel proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors, prioritise pupils' safety. They make sure that staff receive regular training so they can carry out their roles effectively. All staff know the signs to look out for if pupils are at risk. Staff are vigilant to potential issues and quick to record them. Records are thorough and leaders follow up concerns rigorously. They involve external agencies when appropriate. As a result, pupils get the right support at the right time.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including learning about how to approach potentially risky situations as they get older.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not implemented consistently well. Leaders have not ensured that teachers provide learning activities that help pupils to learn the intended curriculum effectively. Consequently, pupils are not progressing as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge and skills to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Some pupils with SEND are not consistently well supported in classroom lessons. This means that a few pupils could achieve even more than they already do. Leaders should make sure that teachers adapt the curriculum and their pedagogical choices so that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum.
- In a small number of subjects, the checks that teachers make on pupils' learning are not well established. This is hindering some teachers in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge, resulting in pupils not consistently building their understanding. Leaders should ensure that teachers check what pupils have learned carefully and use this information to plan future learning 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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	110388
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10256409
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Raymond Moodley
Headteacher	Carrie Matthews
Website	willenprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average sized primary school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors, along with a group of governors. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing, physical education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors

discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the reading deep dive, inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors considered early years through all deep dives, and also met with early years leaders.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and spoke to governors, school leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors considered the safeguarding education that pupils receive. Throughout the inspection, leaders considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans, minutes from recent meetings of the board of governors and a range of external reports.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, and asked what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to the staff and pupil surveys and responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the associated free-text comments. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the gate during the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Brinkley	Ofsted Inspector
Lorraine Greco	Ofsted Inspector

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