

On the 16th and 17th May Ofsted inspected the academy to check the progress and improvements being made. A summary of the inspection report is in the information below. For the full inspection report, please visit the academy website www.willowacademy.org/ofsted

The effectiveness of leadership & management

What did the Inspectors say we are doing well?

- “Leaders and governors are addressing the weaknesses of the school effectively. Variability in staff expectations of what pupils should and must achieve is being systematically addressed, and weaknesses in the quality, consistency and impact of teaching are being tackled. This is happening through carefully planned and implemented actions that are rigorously followed up.”
- “The Headteacher works effectively with parents. Parents reported that the school has improved significantly since the Headteacher’s appointment.”
- “The IEC has worked effectively with the new Headteacher and her team to support and challenge leaders’ actions in order to ensure rapid and assured progress. The Headteacher reports regularly and effectively to this committee.”
- “Leaders are working effectively to address some pupils’ poor behaviour and attitudes to learning.”
- “There are clear signs that the insistence on the highest standards of behaviour and respectful attitudes to others is having a positive impact on learning at the school.”
- “Structures are now in place to track the progress of every child in order to identify gaps in skills and knowledge and to celebrate success.”
- “The Headteacher has taken effective steps to address the weaknesses in the structure, robustness and focus of leadership in the school.”
- “It is clear from inspection evidence that the Foundation Stage area of the school is increasingly effective.”
- “The school is receiving effective support from the Wakefield City Academies Trust...and Doncaster Local Authority”

What did the Inspectors say we need to do next?

- Increase the level of focus on the performance of groups of children within the school in the Headteacher’s reports to the IEC.
- Ensure that the impact of the improvement in behaviour is maintained and increased
- Ensure that progress information is consistently used by staff to focus and improve the impact of their teaching.
- Ensure the newly extended leadership team’s impact is maximised in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum, teaching, reading and for disadvantaged pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

What did the Inspectors say we are doing well?

- “Improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are more evident in the early years foundation stage and key stage 1 than in key stage 2.”
- “Writing in the early years is a particular strength. Children are encouraged to write at length with a growing awareness of their audience.”
- “As a result of leaders’ actions, teachers across the school are now using assessments of how well pupils are doing to plan next steps in their learning.”
- “Inspection evidence shows that the regular and systematic analysis of pupils’ progress is being used to focus teaching on what pupils need to do to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.”
- “Teaching assistants are generally well deployed across the school.”
- “All staff now have access to training, support and other opportunities to develop their skills. Leaders have put in place rigorous structures to ensure that this training and support focuses on the needs of the school...the impact on staff morale and enthusiasm is already clear.”

What did the Inspectors say we need to do next?

- Increase the level of consistently high quality teaching across all areas with a focus on Key Stage 2 through high expectations for all including the most able pupils.
- Ensure further development of the wider curriculum, in particular, Science and Religious Education.
- Provide more opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to collaboratively plan across year groups.
- Further develop the questioning skills of staff so that pupils are more challenged and thrilled by their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

What did the Inspectors say we are doing well?

- “The introduction of the new school-wide approach to behaviour earlier this year has been welcomed by pupils. They say they like the clear rewards system.”
- “The introduction of ‘family dining’, where pupils of different ages sit down together to eat, has been welcomed by all... (with a) significant improvement in pupils’ behaviour since the new dining arrangements were introduced.”
- “The school’s work to keep pupils safe is effective. Pupils say that they feel and are safe in school. They know the risks of the internet and how to minimise them. They know about the different forms that bullying can take and are confident that, if it should occur, it would be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. They are very complimentary about the levels of care they receive from staff at the school.”
- “The school’s work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is increasingly effective.”
- “Pupils also have chances to take on roles of responsibility. For example, the recently introduced ‘Active leaders’ scheme enables pupils to work with and supervise younger pupils at break and lunchtimes.”
- “Pupils’ attendance is very carefully monitored and is close to national averages.”
- “A review of pupils’ books and folders undertaken by inspectors showed clear improvements in presentation over recent months.”

What did the Inspectors say we need to do next?

- Focus on eradicating any low level disruption in small groups of pupils particularly with some Key Stage 2 boys.
- Increase the attendance of all children particularly those eligible for free school meals.
- Continue to increase the quality of presentation across all areas of the academy and ensure teachers pick up on poorly presented work in a consistent manner.

Outcomes for pupils

What did the Inspectors say we are doing well?

- “Inspection evidence and the school’s own information shows that there has been some improvement in pupils’ progress.”
- “In the early years foundation stage, there is clear evidence of sustained progress resulting from high expectations and stimulating teaching and independent learning.”
- “Phonics is effectively taught.”
- “Staff have worked effectively to raise the profile of reading since the previous inspection. There is clear evidence that this is having a positive impact on pupils’ love and experience of reading.”
- The school’s own information suggests that outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are beginning to improve.
- “as a result of sound leadership, most staff have higher expectations of their pupils.”

What did the Inspectors say we need to do next?

- Remove the variability in pupils’ progress across the school particularly with disadvantaged pupils.
- Remove the inconsistency in staff expectations of pupils across the academy.

The inspectors believe that leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures. The feedback above shows that whilst we are making positive progress there is still much to do.

Thank you to all parents and carers for all your support and feedback, it’s clear that by continuing to work together, we can and will ensure our children achieve their potential at Willow Academy.

Mrs D Sumner, Headteacher.