

Inspection of Willow Park C of E Primary School

Park Lane, St Michael’s Hill, Bristol BS2 8BE

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not experience a well-designed curriculum. The school has not developed a curriculum that meets pupils' needs, including for a large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). As a result, pupils in all key stages have significant gaps in their learning and do not achieve well. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.

Pupils feel cared for and safe. They behave well and are courteous and kind. However, the curriculum is not ambitious enough and so pupils' attitudes to learning are not always positive. Pupils become disengaged and distracted in lessons and lose focus on their learning.

Pupils are invested in the school's vision to 'be the light'. They enjoy being part of the school council and worship committee. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning through broader experiences, including trips, visits and extra-curricular clubs.

The school knows its community well. It is committed to support families who arrive mid-year and is proud about how it welcomes new children. A 'new arrivals' group to support transition is in place, as well as work with local partners to gain a clear understanding of individual family needs.

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

The school has not quickly identified the areas of the curriculum that need to be developed or strengthened. It has not identified the important knowledge that pupils should learn across the curriculum. Pupils do not learn the essential knowledge they need to learn more and remember more. For instance, pupils struggle to remember key historical events and have an inaccurate understanding of significant figures, such as John Cabot. Staff do not check what pupils know and can do. As a result, pupils' prior knowledge is not built on effectively, and misconceptions are not addressed.

Even though reading has been a main focus for the school, pupils do not read with fluency and confidence. Staff follow the school's phonics programme, but the school does not consistently check how well pupils apply their knowledge of sounds in their reading. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, do not learn to read well. They do not achieve the outcomes they need to. Teachers listen to the most disadvantaged pupils and those who speak EAL read regularly, but they do not develop pupils' ability effectively to decode and blend words precisely enough.

The school has recently developed new sequences of learning in mathematics. However, inconsistencies in how staff use mathematical vocabulary mean pupils who struggle with language do not develop their understanding securely enough to tackle more complex reasoning and problem-solving activities.

The school ensures that pastoral and nurturing support for pupils to feel safe and ready to start school is in place. However, leaders do not adapt the curriculum sufficiently well to help pupils who speak EAL to develop their language skills. Staff do not understand how to break down barriers to learning, so pupils are not able to learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive timely support. The school is developing an approach to meet the needs of pupils when they start school. Pupils with SEND receive targeted help to learn at the appropriate level. However, they do not progress quickly enough to build on their prior knowledge and skills.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum details what pupils need to learn. However, pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values is limited. This means they are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Nonetheless, pupils are proud to be members of various school committees and understand how to stay safe online and be healthy.

Governors understand that the school needs to improve. They have recently engaged in external advice to strengthen the strategic direction of the school. However, this has not had a significant impact on pupils' outcomes. Pupils are not receiving the education they need to achieve their full potential.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is poorly designed. Pupils do not build knowledge and skills over time to help them to learn the curriculum successfully. The school must ensure that the curriculum in all subjects identifies the essential knowledge and skills pupils need to learn.
- Pupils struggle to apply their knowledge of sounds in their reading. Staff do not consistently support pupils to read with accuracy. Consequently, pupils do not develop reading fluency. The school must ensure that staff develop pupils' decoding and blending of words so pupils are able to access more challenging work as they move through the school.
- The curriculum is not consistently adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who speak EAL. As a result, pupils do not develop their language skills effectively enough. Furthermore, many struggle to learn the wider curriculum, including in PSHE. The school should ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils and those who speak EAL in order for them to achieve success in all aspects of their learning.

- Assessment is limited in all areas of the curriculum. Staff lack the knowledge to identify what pupils need to know and where there are gaps in pupils' understanding. This means that pupils do not get the support they need to achieve well. The school must swiftly design a systematic approach to assessment.
- The school has not taken urgent action to address the systemic weaknesses that exist. As a result, pupils do not receive the quality of education they deserve. The school must work with external support to urgently address these weaknesses.
- The school may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148841
Local authority	Bristol City
Inspection number	10315635
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Bremner and Dr Mary Benton (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Chris Phillips
Website	www.willowpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Michael's on the Mount Church of England Primary School and St George's Church of England Primary School formally amalgamated in September 2021 to form what is now known as Willow Park Church of England Primary School.
- The school serves a high number of pupils who speak EAL.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its pupils.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, a representative from the local authority and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects. These included science and art.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interest first.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. They also took account of the responses to the staff and pupil surveys and met with parents and carers at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Darren Preece, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ross Newman

Ofsted Inspector

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