

Willow Bank Primary School

Address: Seacourt Road, Thamesmead, London, SE2 9XB

Unique reference number (URN): 136932

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically achieve well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) generally make secure progress from their starting points. However, some pupils, including some pupils with SEND, do not meet the expected standard in national tests. Leaders are swift to address this. They identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and adapt the curriculum to address them. For example, they have improved the teaching of punctuation and grammar. The impact of this work is evident in the quality of pupils' writing. Nevertheless, leaders are aware of the importance of further developing pupils' writing and recording skills.

Leaders have high ambition for all pupils. They support the large number of pupils who join the school at different times and carefully monitor their progress.

Pupils have a secure recall of knowledge across the curriculum. The work in their books demonstrates the effective progress they make through the curriculum.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders work extensively to promote high attendance and punctuality. They help families and pupils understand the importance of how every minute, hour and day at the school matters. Leaders work to understand the barriers to attendance that families may face and help them to overcome these, for example, through pastoral support such as breakfast club and access to the wellbeing room. Leaders' work, including the role of pupil 'attendance ambassadors', has created a supportive and caring environment that has had a positive impact on pupils' attendance and punctuality.

Behaviour across the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils appreciate the consistent approach from staff. Generally, pupils show high levels of engagement and focus on their learning. Pupils demonstrate the school's value of kindness to each other. Staff know pupils well. They provide tailored support such as 'sensory circuits' and 'calming breaks' to support some pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities to manage their behaviour. Leaders carefully monitor behaviour to identify any trends and to learn from incidents. This has led to a reduction in behaviour concerns. Pupils state that if bullying occurs, leaders are swift to deal with it.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is well sequenced. It ensures that pupils build the required knowledge and skills in line with the national curriculum. Pupils enjoy learning a wide range of curriculum subjects. Leaders prioritise pupils' reading and writing knowledge. This ensures pupils can access the curriculum and are prepared for the next stage in learning.

Teachers check pupils' understanding, for example, through careful questioning. They identify any gaps in learning and address these through interventions and support. Leaders know there is further training required to ensure that all staff know how to address

misconceptions and extend pupils' learning. Teachers typically have secure subject knowledge and present new information clearly. They support pupils to make links between their learning. For example, pupils use their detailed knowledge from their learning in history to write realistic diary entries about historical events.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or barriers to learning receive the precise support they need to access learning. Teachers adapt learning tasks. For example, they provide pupils with SEND with the key vocabulary to be used. In mathematics, a range of resources are provided to meet pupils' individual needs. For example, pupils use different types of rulers to help them to understand measuring.

Leaders have focused on developing pupils' language and vocabulary so that pupils can share their understanding and articulate their views. Teachers support pupils to use key vocabulary in their discussions and writing.

Early years

Expected standard 

The well-designed environment provides children with a wide range of opportunities to develop their learning. The curriculum is carefully planned and helps children build their foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. Early reading is a priority as children learn the phonics knowledge they need to read and write. Children learn number facts and apply these confidently in activities, for example, counting the number of icebergs in the water.

Children in Reception Class develop a love of reading. Books and stories are central to learning in the early years. They provide a rich vocabulary that children use in their independent activities, for instance, when learning about different climates and habitats linked to 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. Staff read to children in ways that are engaging. Children enjoy this and listen attentively. Staff support and encourage children's language development. However, at times, this is not precise and linked well to learning.

Leaders build positive relationships with families and provide a range of opportunities for them to engage in their child's education. Children achieve well from their starting points and are well prepared for their next stage in learning. Routines are embedded swiftly. Children learn to build positive relationships. For example, they learn to take turns on the trikes.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a wide range of training to ensure that all staff know how to identify and meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers help pupils to access learning within their classroom through support and adaptations, for example the use of technology to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Extensive support is in place through the community and family workers to nurture pupils' confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Leaders seek advice from external professionals, which helps to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the bespoke education they need. They work closely with parents and carers to gain a full understanding of each pupil's needs. Leaders are swift to address gaps in learning, and well-planned interventions target pupils' individual learning needs. Leaders

prioritise the teaching of phonics and writing, which enables pupils to access the wider curriculum. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

Staff know pupils' needs well. They ensure that pupils receive a wide range of support to thrive. The school uses additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils with their learning as well as wider opportunities, such as trips and sporting activities. This has a positive impact on pupils' development.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have a robust understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Professional learning for staff is carefully aligned to the school's priorities. Pupils are at the heart of all decisions made. Leaders show great ambition for pupils to achieve and thrive. Leaders are acutely aware of the needs of the school's community. They provide an inclusive environment that meets the needs of the high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have forged positive and constructive relationships with parents and carers.

New staff feel welcomed into the school and receive support through bespoke induction training. Staff are happy and proud to work at the school. They all share the same high expectations for pupils. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of their workload and wellbeing. They value the support they receive and opportunities to work with other schools in the trust.

The trust works with school leaders to ensure a consistent and positive school environment. The trust and local academy council have a thorough understanding of the school's context and its priorities. They understand their statutory responsibilities, including in the thorough oversight of safeguarding. The trust provides additional support to address the school's priorities, for example, through the school's dedicated speech and language therapy. The trust and local academy council have a secure understanding of pupils' progress and challenge leaders to provide the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to support pupils' personal development. The rich curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge to understand positive relationships, both in person and online. When appropriate, the school engages with external partners, such as the police, to ensure pupils know how to stay safe in the community.

Pupils value their diverse cultural heritage. They appreciate that they have different beliefs. Pupils confidently contribute in lessons, listen well to their peers and build on their responses. Well-chosen texts help to celebrate and understand the inclusive community. Pupils embrace the concepts of the fundamental British values.

Leaders ensure the extensive pupil leadership opportunities skilfully develop pupils' understanding of responsibility and commitment. Pupils aspire to be the CEO or manager of an ambassador group. They strive to support the school community and to be named

'employee of the week'. They are proud of the positive impact their role has on the school community. These positions help to build confidence and public speaking.

Leaders carefully plan wider enrichment opportunities to ensure equity of experiences. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils access a range of opportunities. Trips enhance curriculum understanding. For example, pupils gain greater knowledge of Ancient Egypt through looking at artefacts at the British Museum. Year 6 pupils love the opportunity to develop independence and to challenge themselves with new skills on the residential trip.

The wide range of clubs encourage pupils to try new activities and develop talents. Pupils love the opportunity to represent the school, for example, at Young Voices or in sporting tournaments. Pupils care about their wider community. They carry out local litter picking and visit care homes. Outdoor learning ensures pupils have opportunities to play and learn in nature. For example, Year 5 pupils enhance their knowledge of what it is like to be an explorer. Pupils grow vegetables in the school garden to understand the science of plants.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school nurtures pupils to feel welcome and happy. Pupils enjoy school, attend well and are excited to share their learning. Staff and pupils are proud to be part of a close-knit school community that works together to achieve the school's core values. Pupils demonstrate great respect for each other. They celebrate the school's cultural diversity at every turn, for example, through cultural days and summer festivals.

All staff have high aspirations for each pupil. Pupils, including those with an education, health and care plan, know that staff will go the extra mile to help them achieve. Pupils are active members of the school community. They work hard to meet the school's high expectations for learning and behaviour. For example, the 'Champions for Change' school council group works with local councillors to make positive changes in the local community.

Pupils benefit from highly positive relationships with staff. This helps pupils to speak out if they have any worries. They know they will be listened to and helped. As a result, pupils feel safe. Pupils' behaviour across the school is calm and positive. Pupils show kindness and care. They look forward to spending time with Willow the school dog to help them feel settled. A wide range of experiences help pupils to understand responsibility and life in modern Britain. Pupil ambassadors take their roles to uphold the ethos of the school seriously. They want the school to be a happy, positive environment. Attendance ambassadors help their peers to understand the importance of attending school.

Pupils experience the full national curriculum offer. They build strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Typically, pupils achieve well and make secure progress from their individual starting points. The school is swift to support any barriers to learning that pupils may face.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to ensure that teachers systematically check pupils' understanding so that pupils are challenged in their learning and can achieve the best possible outcomes.
 - Leaders should strengthen the teaching of writing so that pupils consistently develop their transcription skills.
 - Leaders should ensure that professional learning supports staff to develop high-quality interactions so that pupils develop their language and vocabulary as securely as possible.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Woodland Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Nav Sanghara, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nick Osborne.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders, the director of education for the trust, the CEO, a member of the local advisory committee and members of the trust board during the inspection.

Information about this school:

The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Since the last inspection, the school has undergone significant changes to leadership.

The recorded number of pupils on roll does not fully reflect the number of pupils who attend the school. This is because the school's published admission number has been capped this academic year. The school is operating as a one-form entry school with a capacity for 210 pupils and 182 on roll.

Headteacher: Mrs Clare Beresford

Lead inspector:

Sacha Husnu-Beresford, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Emma O'Connor, Ofsted Inspector

Bethan McKenzie, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

210

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

62.86%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

5.24%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

28.10%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	56%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	58%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	60%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	74%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	64%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	64%	73%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	70%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	66%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	65%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	66%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	47%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	53%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	73%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	70%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	62%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	61%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	68%	-16 pp
2024/25 (revised)	63%	69%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	53%	67%	-14 pp
2022/23 (final)	42%	66%	-24 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	80%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	73%	81%	-7 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	61%	78%	-18 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	78%	-15 pp
2024/25 (revised)	70%	78%	-8 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-21 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	77%	-14 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	62%	80%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	79%	-20 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	61%	79%	-19 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.2%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.1%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	10.7%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	19.7%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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