

Willow Farm Primary School

Address: Willow Lane, NG4 4BN

Unique reference number (URN): 145371

Inspection report: 6 January 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.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve well at Willow Farm. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who need extra help make secure progress from their starting points because teaching is clear and support is well matched to their needs. Pupils retain knowledge well and produce high-quality work across a range of subjects. This matches the positive picture seen in the school's published results. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is above other pupils nationally in recent years.

Pupils achieve well in reading. The proportion of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics screening test is above average. Pupils achieve particularly strongly in reading at the end of Year 6, helped by secure early reading foundations and well-targeted support. Outcomes in writing assessments have been close to average. In mathematics, pupils' results have improved rapidly over the last three years, with 2025 results above average.

Early years

Strong standard ●

Staff in the early years create a warm, welcoming environment. Relationships between adults and children are nurturing and supportive. Staff take time to understand each child's needs, interests and starting points, which helps them plan activities that build children's confidence and curiosity. Children behave well. They learn routines quickly, play cooperatively and swiftly develop increasing independence.

The curriculum is well designed and sequenced. The environment is carefully organised, so children can access activities that build foundational knowledge and skills. Provision for three-year-olds is thoughtful and closely matched to children's developmental needs. Strong partnerships with parents help staff build a clear picture of what children already know. Children develop secure early language, communication and mathematical skills through purposeful play and high-quality interactions with adults. Staff model language effectively and encourage children to explore, ask questions and solve problems. Reading through phonics is prioritised and taught effectively. Pupils quickly get to grips with the knowledge they need to read and write.

Leaders ensure that any emerging needs are identified early and work closely with parents and external professionals to ensure that children, including disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the extra help they need. Overall, children are very well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders are justifiably proud of the school's inclusive approach. Leaders have high expectations for every pupil, including those who face disadvantage, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are known to social care. They identify pupils' needs quickly and accurately and work closely with families and external professionals to make sure pupils receive the right support at the right time.

Staff receive high-quality training that enables them to understand each pupil's needs, interests and potential. Provision such as nurture groups, speech and language therapy, emotional wellbeing programmes and sensory support helps pupils feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Leaders monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND closely, adjusting support when needed. These approaches help pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.

The pupil premium funding is used effectively by leaders to remove any barriers to pupils being able to achieve, belong and thrive. This ranges from ensuring that pupils can easily access extra-curricular clubs and trips to providing additional help so that pupils attend school regularly and achieve high standards across the curriculum. Leaders work effectively with parents and carers, as well as the virtual school, to support children in care.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils and committed to providing a high-quality, inclusive education. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and their improvement priorities are well chosen and based on secure evidence. Leaders reflect carefully on their work to ensure that the school's provision meets pupils' needs consistently well, and any areas requiring development strengthen quickly. The impact of their actions is evident in rising standards across the school. Their commitment to inclusion is clear in the positive progress made by disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and in the precise support provided for the most vulnerable pupils.

Staff speak highly of the support they receive. They develop a strong subject knowledge through a wide range of professional learning, mentoring and coaching offered by the school and the trust. Leaders are mindful of staff's wellbeing and workload and take steps to reduce unnecessary tasks.

Governance is strong. Governors and trustees know the school well and provide effective challenge and support. They ensure that statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, are well met.

Leaders build positive relationships across the school community and know families extremely well. Parents are highly positive about the education and care their children receive. Leaders ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The programme for personal development is designed well. It offers a rich, inclusive and community-rooted range of experiences. These experiences build pupils' character and confidence, while giving them the knowledge and opportunities they need to understand the world and thrive. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, staying safe online and the importance of respecting differences. Pupils benefit from high-quality outdoor play, with families helping to create spaces, such as the 'Mud Café'. A wide range of physical and outdoor activities beyond the school also promote health, teamwork and resilience.

By undertaking a series of activities throughout their time in school, pupils connect increasingly with the wider world. This especially supports the most disadvantaged pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Pupils take part in clubs and visits, such as performing at 'Willow Fest', singing at the Royal Concert Hall and taking part in theatre activities. Pupils feel empowered to take on meaningful leadership roles through the pupil parliament, as play leaders and in enterprise projects. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger children, and this contributes to the strong sense of community across the school. These roles develop pupils' confidence. Leaders also celebrate pupils who consistently demonstrate the school's 'PRIDE' values through the 'Always Children' awards. Pupils know the importance of being positive, responsible, inquisitive, determined and empathetic. They understand these help prepare them for life beyond Willow Farm and develops their understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils enjoy many cultural opportunities. They learn about festivals, such as Diwali when they make rangoli patterns, share sweets and decorate their hands with henna. Visits and workshops, such as science trips to an observatory and creative writing sessions, spark pupils' curiosity and interest in learning beyond the classroom. Together, these experiences help pupils to thrive socially, academically and personally.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders' work with pupils and families to promote regular attendance is effective, resulting in notable improvements in attendance over time and some rapid improvements for individuals. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attend more regularly than their peers nationally. Whole school attendance is above national average, and persistent absence is significantly below national average.

Pupils behave well at Willow Farm. They are polite, friendly and respectful towards one another. Leaders have set clear expectations, and staff model these consistently. Staff apply the school's behaviour-related policies and procedures effectively. Pupils respond positively and enjoy being part of a school where kindness and respect are valued. They arrive each morning with smiling faces, ready to learn. In lessons, pupils usually focus well and use learning time productively. Leaders recognise that occasional lapses in concentration can affect learning, and they are supporting staff to refine teaching and engagement strategies, so pupils develop even stronger learning behaviours. Bullying and unkind language are very rare and not tolerated. When incidents do occur, leaders act swiftly and support all pupils involved effectively. Parents value the school's caring approach and the support their children receive, which results in pupils developing a real sense of belonging.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of how well the curriculum and teaching are working across the school. They make thoughtful decisions that lead to real improvements, and this is reflected in the strong progress pupils are making. Leaders have

developed a well-planned, ambitious curriculum that has been refined over time so that pupils build their knowledge step by step.

Teachers are well trained in how children learn and demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge. Staff share a clear understanding of the approaches that help pupils remember learning securely. As a result, learning is purposeful, and typically engaging and taught well. Pupils receive the teaching they need to secure strong foundations in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff give timely support to pupils who need extra help. Leaders recognise the need to continue to strengthen the level of challenge to move pupils on to more complex work so that they deepen their understanding.

Across the wider curriculum, pupils produce thoughtful, well-presented work. Teaching extends pupils' language and vocabulary, both spoken and written well. Occasionally, the expectation for technical accuracy in writing across all subjects is not high enough. Teaching is consistently adapted thoughtfully for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that all pupils can access the curriculum well.

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

Pupils at Willow Farm experience a nurturing, joyful and highly inclusive education. From the moment they join the school, children are understood and valued as individuals. Staff understand their needs deeply and work hard to remove any barriers to learning or wellbeing. As a result, pupils achieve well from their starting points, including those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils known to social care. The school's approach enables pupils to learn with curiosity and confidence, developing a genuine love of learning that continues as they move through the school. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps, reflected in improving outcomes across reading, writing and mathematics.

Relationships across year groups are a particular strength. Older and younger pupils play and learn together naturally, helping them to build resilience, collaborate effectively and form friendships beyond their immediate peer group. This contributes to a strong sense of belonging and a warm, supportive community where pupils are safe and happy. Pupils enjoy a wide range of broader experiences, including activities inspired by the school values, residential trips and curriculum enrichment that extends learning beyond the academic. Events such as the 'Willow Fest' music festival, featuring the Ukrainian choir, help pupils to develop cultural awareness and confidence. All pupils are fully included in school life, regardless of need or background.

Pupils thrive at Willow Farm. They understand the school's 'PRIDE' values and talk confidently about how these help them to contribute positively to their school, local community and wider society. They behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Bullying is very rare. If it occurs, leaders deal with it swiftly and effectively. Through carefully planned curriculum content, such as online safety and anti-racism, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are active citizens within the local community, for example in the school's community garden and raising money for charity.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen writing across the curriculum by ensuring consistent expectations for the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
 - Leaders should ensure that learning activities are consistently designed to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils, including those who are ready to work at greater depth, so that more pupils deepen their understanding and achieve highly across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should support staff to refine teaching and engagement strategies to further improve pupils' learning behaviours.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Equals Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jenny Cook, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Peter Foale.

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.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and the other school leaders and the staff. Inspectors also spoke with the trust leaders, the trustees and the local governors, including the chair of the local governing body. Inspectors spoke to the pupils and the parents and carers throughout the inspection.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. The school has been registered to provide nursery provision. Children can currently join the nursery from age 3.

Headteacher: Lindsey Jamson

Lead inspector:

Anne Maingay, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Dawn Ashbolt, Ofsted Inspector

Ian Pearson, 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 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

214

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

210

Below 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)

8.41%

Well below 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

0.93%

Below 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

10.28%

Below average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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	60%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	68%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	56%	61%	Close to average
2022/23	56%	60%	Close to average

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	87%	74%	Above
2024/25	94%	75%	Above
2023/24	84%	74%	Above
2022/23	84%	73%	Above

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	73%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	77%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	81%	72%	Above
2022/23	59%	71%	Below

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	77%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	87%	74%	Above
2023/24	75%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	69%	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	64%	46%	Above
2024/25	S	47%	S
2023/24	S	46%	S
2022/23	S	44%	S

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	82%	62%	Above
2024/25	S	63%	S
2023/24	S	62%	S
2022/23	S	60%	S

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	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25	S	59%	S
2023/24	S	58%	S
2022/23	S	58%	S

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	64%	60%	Close to average
2024/25	S	61%	S
2023/24	S	59%	S
2022/23	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	64%	68%	-4 pp
2024/25	S	69%	S
2023/24	S	67%	S
2022/23	S	66%	S

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	82%	80%	2 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	80%	S
2022/23	S	78%	S

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	64%	78%	-14 pp
2024/25	S	78%	S
2023/24	S	78%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23	S	77%	S

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	64%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25	S	81%	S
2023/24	S	79%	S
2022/23	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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 terms)	3.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24	4.9%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23	4.4%	5.9%	Below

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 terms)	4.3%	13.3%	Below
2023/24	10.3%	14.6%	Below
2022/23	7.0%	16.2%	Below

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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