

Academy name	Willow Primary School	
Sponsor	Marish Academy Trust	
Date of visit	7 October 2014	
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Results						Predicted	
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Level 4+ Reading, writing and maths	None	None	None	None	None	46%	75%
Two levels progress, reading						100%	
Two levels progress, writing						100%	
Two levels progress, maths						82%	
Ofsted	March 2014: RI (3)						
Willow is a new school opened in 2010	2014 Only 24 in cohort. Only 10 with KS1 data				NO KS2 results until 2014		

Purpose of visit

The visit is to provide an assessment for the DfE and Regional Schools Commissioner, Martin Post, of issues, progress and further actions required at Willow Primary School. This has been prompted by outcomes from the first Ofsted monitoring visit following the inspection of May 2014 in which the school was judged to have serious weaknesses.

Key issues

Background and context

Willow became a sponsored Academy within the Marish Academy Trust in February 2013. HMI's 'No formal designation monitoring inspection' in July 2013 found that Willow had made reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures. The Ofsted inspection in March 2014 graded the school as 'Requiring Improvement' because 'teaching and learning' and 'pupil outcomes' are not yet good. The inspection also judged 'leadership and management' and 'behaviour, safety and attendance' to be good; in line with the school's own evaluation. Willow opened Sept 2010 and has an erratic population profile and there is considerable deprivation, SEN (12%) and EAL (87%). Pupil Premium children are 20% of total roll of 410 pupils.

Achievement

Children in the Early Year Foundation stage, Year 1 Phonics screening and Key Stage 1 SATs exceeded national averages. This was Willow's first year 6 cohort. All children, regardless of when they arrived in the country with EAL, are included in Willow's data. 71% achieved a L4 (NA 85%). However, they have made exceptional progress from their starting points. Out of the 25 children who sat the KS2 tests only 40% were in England 4 years ago. The remaining 15 children joined the country across the past 4 years, most with little or no English. The proportion of children making expected progress across the key stage from KS1 or from their starting points is outstanding: 96% in Reading and Maths and 100% in Writing.

However overall progress towards this target is still judged by the school as requiring improvement because of some cohorts in KS2 are not making enough progress in the first half of this academic year. We would endorse this finding but evidence shows that the leadership are setting very high targets for improving progress aiming for 80% L4+ in 2015. Current data shows Willow is predicted to attain 75% L4+ for RWM representing a 30% improvement on 2014

Quality of teaching

Our visit found the quality of teaching to be consistently good. The improvement of teaching and learning is a key priority in Willow Primary School's Aspire Plan and Post Ofsted Action Plan. The school has put a major emphasis on improving teaching and learning through implementation of rigorous performance management processes, setting high expectations and following up where these are not met. The internal monitoring of lessons shows that the quality of teaching is improving incrementally and those whose lessons did not meet the more rigorous standards have now left the school.

Lessons are planned confidently and collaboratively. Behaviour for learning is good, the classroom learning environment is positive, children are engaged, focussed and on task; it is evident that pupils enjoy their learning. Staff questioning is effective and contributes to a very positive learning environment.

During the visit all lessons observed were good or better. A number of positive features of teaching were seen:

- Teachers plan consistently, showing clear objectives for lessons and identifying specific individuals at risk of underachievement e.g. Pupil Premium;

- There was effective praise and reward for pupils' positive contributions;
- There was evidence of good questioning by teachers, to which children made articulate responses;
- Children responded well to adults and to other children, and showed positive attitudes to learning;
- There were high quality interactions between teachers and pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour observed in lessons, around the school and in lessons was very good, with positive attitudes to learning helping to improve progress. Pupils respond confidently to adults and are keen to talk about their learning. They were polite, articulate and engaged positively with their teachers. During the visit pupils were on-task, engaged with their learning and there was no evidence of low-level disruption. Pupils' positive attitudes have an increasing impact on the progress they make.

Attendance has improved through the efforts of the school and in 2013/14 it was 95%. It remains a school priority for improvement with was a target of 95.7%. Attitudes towards attendance improve as pupils progress through the school. The number of fixed term exclusions has increased last academic year from 0 to 4 (3 children) but there were no exclusions in the summer term. All children receive support from learning mentors and 1 child has support from outside agencies.

Quality of leadership and management

The Ofsted inspection of March 2014 found leadership and management at Willow to be good. They felt that actions to raise achievement had not had sufficient time to have a full impact in writing and maths. They also felt that middle leaders do not use assessment data rigorously. Our observations would endorse these findings that leadership is strong and there is now clear evidence that leaders at all levels are effective and use assessment data consistently.

The leadership team has now been strengthened and middle leaders have been appointed, roles and responsibilities clearly defined. There is evidence the school is well on the way to meet its target of developing the expertise of middle and senior leaders to hold each other to account for the quality of teaching and to have a thorough understanding of pupil performance. Shared observations and best practice amongst all staff across the Trust are well established. A teaching and learning coaching team is working across the Trust, providing staff meeting training and INSET as well as personalised coaching support with the aim of every teacher becoming outstanding.

Support from Marish Academy Trust + External Support

In the first year support included full leadership support including governance, provision of Executive Headteacher on a virtual full time basis, Assistant Headteacher and several other teachers to improve standards and inclusion; appointment of 20 new staff since September 2012; deployment of staff across the Trust to enhance provision and leadership.

In addition there was full HR support as part of the Trust's package with School's HR Co-operative from conversion and prior to conversion from SDHR, an approved LA provider. This includes proactive performance management of all staff, some under capability and disciplinary procedures. It now also includes all statutory policies and procedures, including induction programme and performance management for all staff.

External support

Marish Academy Trust continued to work with local schools and academies, on moderation, art and music across the LA and with Langley and Upton Court Grammars on the new curriculum, challenge for the more able and best practice in Maths and English. They work with Langley Academy on Science, DT and transition. Additional support was provided by SIP(NLE) and her school.

Recommendations:

1. Continue the improvements set out in the Aspire Plan focussing on teaching and learning
2. Analyse the progress data emerging from the data collection processes to produce a summary self-evaluation update by February 2015.
3. Ensure that actions and interventions relate specifically to the self-evaluation and that impact evidence is documented at all levels but prioritising Y6.

Agreed actions for school & Marish Academy Trust	Owner	Deadline
DfE to send scorecard to Academy to complete and return to DfE	Kiran Teli	November
Academy to complete DfE score card and send to RSC.	Executive Headteacher	January and April 2015

Marish Academy Trust to forward to RSC an update of the new Trust, LGB arrangements and membership of both.	Chair of Trust	November 2015
Marish Academy Trust to forward to RSC recent LGB minutes, Aspire Improvement Plans + evidence of external support	Executive HT	November 2015

Evidence and sources

Meetings with:

- Executive Headteacher, Governors of Trust and LGB, Associate Head, senior staff, Finance and Facilities Directors
- Learning walk and book scrutiny including visits to lessons EYFS, KS1, KS2
- Scrutiny of documents and data, including Aspire Plan, Post Ofsted Action Plan, Transition Matrices