

We had an inspection from Ofsted in September. It is a long time since we last had a full inspection; the Ofsted regime has changed considerably in that time and the criteria for success is now very different.

Most importantly the inspectors found arrangements for safeguarding to be effective. They recognised the strong sense of community throughout the school, for our pupils, their families and the wider village. They also thought the governors and staff were 'rightly proud' of the support provided throughout the pandemic.

As with the great majority of inspections, there are parts that we are happy with and other areas with which we are very disappointed.

The inspection team identified that Willand School provides a 'great start' for children as they enter school with an ambitious curriculum in the Early Years. From talking to children and through the lesson visits and enrichment experiences evidenced, they found that provision for Personal Development across the school was good. The report says that the children told them they enjoy coming to school and benefit from a calm and orderly environment. The children have confidence in the staff to look after them and there is mutual respect between children and adults. In addition, the inspectors found that the children are polite and well-mannered. They found behaviour to be good.

Throughout the school, the mathematics curriculum is effective and pupils enjoy maths.

But the inspectors say our reading curriculum requires improvement and this has impacted on their overall judgement of the quality of education and therefore the overall effectiveness of the school. This verdict was based on the 'deep dive' of early reading on the first day which highlighted inconsistencies in delivery. We were already aware of some of these issues. The implementation of the new reading programme, Read Write Inc., in September 2019 has twice been interrupted by the school closures due to the pandemic. This has particularly affected the delivery of training and ongoing coaching for our staff to establish consistency. As a school, we had therefore already identified reading as the top priority for this academic year and begun to put measures in place to improve this.

Another area identified for improvement is spelling. A member of staff has been deployed to lead spelling, as part of the English Team, and oversee the development of this area. Further training for teachers has already begun.

Due to Covid-19, there have been no Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 SATs since 2019 and therefore the inspectors did not use our last published data. This showed that in Key Stage 2, our children achieved a 69% combined pass rate in reading, writing and maths. This measure is used to indicate their readiness for secondary school and was 4% higher than the national average and 5% above the average for Devon schools.

The inspectors rightly acknowledged the work of the SENCo but highlighted some inconsistencies in meeting the needs of identified children in some lessons. There are a high number of children with SEND at Willand School; leaders and governors are looking at how

they can further support the SENCo and teaching staff to ensure that we are matching children's learning to their needs in a more effective and consistent way.

As a school, we are determined that the next time the inspectors visit, they will be completely happy with the improvements that have been made.

We would like to conclude by saying that the aim of all the dedicated governors and staff at Willand School continues to be to provide the best possible education for the children in our care.