

Walton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123776
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	363969
Inspection dates	05–06 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Stitfall
Headteacher	Rachel Toal
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	5–6 July 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed five teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils and analysed 98 questionnaires from parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, and reports written by the local authority. Questionnaires completed by 75 pupils and 16 staff were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The ability of leaders at all levels to drive forward improvement and maintain the trend of all groups of pupils to do well.
- How effective strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum are in improving the attainment and progress of boys' literacy.
- How effective procedures are in improving attendance.
- The quality of leadership and management, provision and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Walton is smaller than the average sized primary school on the northern edge of Street. There are currently five mixed-age classes. Each class has two age groups and the Early Years Foundation Stage children are in a class with a few Year 1 pupils.

Pupils are drawn mainly from the village but a few come from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none is at the early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved several national awards, including The International School Award, Artsmark Silver Award and Healthy Schools Plus status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Walton is an outstanding school. Due to excellent leadership and the full commitment of all staff and the governing body members, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities is at the core of leaders' outstanding work. The school gives outstanding value for money because the outcomes for pupils are very impressive. Pupils behave exceptionally well and feel very safe in this happy and nurturing school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed; excellent relationships and good teaching ensure that all children make good progress. This is built upon throughout the school and by the time they leave pupils' attainment is high. Pupils' progress and overall achievement are outstanding, especially in mathematics and reading. Initiatives to improve writing are showing notable signs of improvement. Boys, like other groups, do very well overall, but the school is ambitious to ensure that they do just as outstandingly well in writing as they do in other aspects of their learning. Girls' achievement, and that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is consistently outstanding.

The governing body has robust systems in place through which the governors discharge their statutory responsibilities very well, rigorously monitoring the work of the school and challenging it to continue to improve. The leadership's pursuit of excellence, especially the consistent success in mathematics and reading over the last three years, gives the school an outstanding capacity to sustain and build even further on the improvements already made.

There is a compelling determination and drive to ensure that improvement is sustained and built upon through highly effective processes. Rigorous tracking and regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress, accurate analysis of data and thorough use of excellent assessment processes, lead to very carefully planned learning that meets pupils' individual needs very well. This ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make the progress of which they are capable. Highly effective monitoring procedures have given rise to extremely accurate self-evaluation and resulted in significant professional development for teachers.

The school's strong Christian ethos and excellent relationships underpin all its work, so if there are problems pupils cannot solve they know who to approach for help in sorting it out. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to their work are outstanding. These

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factors ensure a very positive climate for learning. Due to the many opportunities to take part in decision making in many aspects of school life and pupils' outstanding basic skills, pupils are very well prepared for the future.

At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to be good. Since then, there has been considerable improvement in many aspects of the school's work. The care, guidance and support that pupils receive have improved from satisfactory to outstanding. Safeguarding procedures are meticulously adhered to so that pupils feel very safe in school and parents endorse this view. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided for exceptionally well now. All pupils are set challenging targets and know very clearly what they need to do to improve their work. Rigorous procedures for dealing with pupil absence have led to a substantial rise in attendance. Teaching and learning have been lifted from good to become outstanding and reflect the notable enrichment of the curriculum and highly effective assessment procedures. All of these improvements make a substantial contribution to the outstanding progress pupils make and demonstrate why the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

The school's work is exceptionally well supported by its many partnerships and the part the school plays in sharing its own good practice with others. Parents and carers have a high regard for the school and value its work commenting on its 'strong leadership, high standards expected of the children in their work and behaviour and excellent communication.' They say, 'Teaching is of a high standard and all the staff care.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' progress in writing to outstanding by providing:
 - pupils with strategies to improve their spelling
 - resources and tasks that appeal to boys.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children enter school with levels of knowledge and skills broadly as expected for their age. National tests show that in the last three years attainment has been high. For the current Year 6, it is slightly lower this year due to the higher than usual number of pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nonetheless, within mathematics, the current Year 6 have reached exceptionally high levels of attainment. In other year groups, attainment continues to be on track to be much higher than expected.

All groups of pupils enjoy learning, persevere and show considerable ability to work independently. The most able pupils are given opportunities to work on challenging activities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do very well because they are given extremely good support and work that helps them to make quick progress in developing basic skills. For example, during a Years 4/5

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mathematics lesson about the use of scales to measure capacity, pupils made excellent progress because they were helped to work independently. They became exceptionally well focused on the task because it was practical and they were supported by a very skilled teaching assistant.

Topics, such as writing about 'Dr Who', have already been successful with boys, and leaders are correctly working to enliven boys' writing as much as possible and to strengthen all pupils' spelling skills. Strategies to improve reading have been very effective, so that pupils read for a very wide range of purposes and talk about texts with insight and thoughtfulness. All pupils were challenged very well in an outstanding Years 5/6 literacy lesson when they researched the features of a river, made their own glossary of terms and used these to write a descriptive passage. Pupils' interest, especially boys, was captivated at the beginning of the lesson by the excellent use of short video clips showing the path of a river. Leaders are correctly focusing still on writing to ensure that boys do outstandingly well.

Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of how to keep safe by, for example, writing a rap about internet safety and conducting risk assessments around the building. They say they get on well together and are very friendly towards each other. Buddies and the restorative justice system, clearly displayed in the playground, ensure that pupils have very good strategies for sorting out any minor disputes that might arise. Pupils show by their commitment to fruit snacks, healthy lunch boxes, a high take-up of sporting activities and growing vegetables that they have a good understanding of healthy living. This has been validated by their recent Healthy Schools Plus status. The well organised school council is a definite voice for getting things done in school and within the local community. Pupils have a very good understanding of cultural differences globally through their lively link with a school in Kenya. Their understanding of the cultural differences that exist today in the United Kingdom is less well developed and this is why their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good rather than outstanding. Nonetheless, their spiritual, moral and social developments are particularly strong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding. Information and communication technology (ICT) was a strength in all the lessons seen during the inspection, demonstrating a high level of expertise both in adults and pupils. Lessons are very well planned and challenging activities match the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and very well used by teachers. Due to exceptionally well targeted professional development, teachers' subject knowledge and questioning skills, especially in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT, are very secure. Teachers use assessment techniques particularly well to question pupils during lessons and to plan the next steps in their learning. Pupils have a very good knowledge of what to do next to improve their work because of consistently helpful direction from marking, discussions with teachers and from targets.

The curriculum is exceptionally carefully planned over a three-year period to take account of mixed-age classes. Good links are established between subjects, offering pupils many opportunities to practise their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, and visits and visitors regularly enhance provision. For example, Years 2/3 pupils made excellent progress when following up their visit to a nature reserve. They responded very well to the teacher's excellent use of talk partners to discuss their ideas before writing their poems using evocative and expressive vocabulary. The school has recently been awarded the Silver Artsmark, demonstrating particular strengths in music, art and drama. During the inspection pupils were observed enthusiastically preparing for a production of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'. Extra-curricular activities considerably enrich pupils' experiences. An example of this is the environmental work that has been undertaken that has not only strengthened pupils' personal and social development but has also drawn in and involved parents and the local community. One parent commented, 'Children are very enthused by these topics and we talk about them at home. Parents are also encouraged to get involved.'

Pupils are extremely well cared for and well known to all adults. Parents and carers and pupils show a very high level of satisfaction with school safety and safeguarding procedures are carried out diligently. Links with outside agencies are good, supporting the well organised and effective provision for potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is much appreciated by parents, one of whom said, 'The school's Learning Lab has been an excellent experience for my child and the progress he has made is amazing.'

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior teacher show a highly effective partnership. Together with the governing body, they have welded together a whole school team with a very strong spirit of commitment to continuing improvement. Initiatives to improve teaching and learning have been highly successful because self-review and evaluation are very thorough, identifying the correct priorities which inform a detailed action plan. Responsibilities for the many areas of the school's work that have been improved and enhanced are fairly shared across the whole school team and include teaching and other members of staff and governors. Morale is high and everyone is extremely positive and determined that the school should provide the very best provision possible.

The governing body is highly organised and knowledgeable. The governors know the school very well because they are linked to subject areas or aspects of the school's work and are regularly involved at both a strategic and operational level. They are not afraid to ask probing and challenging questions. There is healthy competition for places on the governing body and training and development have a high profile so that new governors attend training before they take up office.

The promotion of community cohesion at school, local and global level is strong, illustrated by the recent International School Award and through links with the village community, churches and the cathedral. For example, the school is represented on the village hall committee and has use of the village's multi-use games area. Key Stage 1 pupils really enjoy 'Open the Book', a regular weekly worship of action songs and Bible stories run by the local community church. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their partnership with Boyani Primary School in Kenya with whom there have been staff exchanges. Pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the United Kingdom is less strong and this is why community cohesion is good rather than outstanding.

The school engages parents and carers extremely well and has a very good range of partnerships with other schools and agencies. Not only do these enhance outcomes for pupils but they enable the school to share some of its own good practice to help other institutions, for example through a member of staff with leading teacher status. Promoting equality of different groups of pupils is very well managed through very careful monitoring. Leaders are very focused on helping boys to do consistently as

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well as girls in their writing and any difference in their attainment and achievement is reducing rapidly. Leaders do not tolerate any kind of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and regular training and monitoring ensures that this high quality is maintained.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

A warm and stimulating environment awaits children in Reception. This, together with good teaching and excellent relationships, enables children to quickly become confident learners at ease in their surroundings. As a result, they make good progress, especially in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. The children’s interest was entirely captivated as, with the help of the interactive whiteboard, they retold the story ‘We are going on a Bear Hunt’. Many recognised words from the story and could read the text as it appeared. They demonstrated that they have good strategies to use as beginning readers. Excitement mounted as a letter appeared inviting them to go and look for bears within the school environment. They enthusiastically, but quietly, chanted the story as they left the room. This imaginative teaching is exciting and entirely appropriate for Reception children, helping them to learn the skill of remembering and retelling as well as extending their vocabulary and knowledge of prepositions as they learn ‘over’, ‘under’ and ‘through’.

In whatever they are engaged, children’s behaviour is exemplary as the children share quality resources and learn together. Their independence is carefully fostered as they set about choosing their own tasks. Adults interact very well with them in their learning, asking appropriate questions that facilitate the children’s rapid development. The indoor environment is planned well, offering opportunities across

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all areas of learning. The new outdoor area is developing well and wheeled toys, sand and water play all contribute to children’s enjoyment as well as to their physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Observations are carefully recorded and assessments used to plan the next steps in learning. Each individual child has a record of their learning journey throughout Reception. Parents do not, as yet, contribute to this from instances of learning at home, but the school has plans to begin this. There are good links with the local pre-school and induction procedures are organised well so that children are familiar with ‘big school’ before they join. Children are very well cared for and the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was high and the vast majority of parents and carers who responded were extremely supportive of the school. Of the very small number of concerns raised most were individual issues. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about the management of pupils’ behaviour and as a result felt that their concerns were not listened to. During the inspection pupils’ behaviour was exemplary and the school has very good systems in place to manage a very small minority of pupils who occasionally experience difficulty in behaving appropriately. The outcome of the questionnaire validates the recent one used and analysed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walton Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 142 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	57	39	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	58	41	42	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	38	60	61	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	45	49	50	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	49	49	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	37	61	62	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	43	54	55	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	40	41	54	55	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	38	55	56	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	26	55	56	9	9	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	27	59	60	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	40	55	56	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	56	41	42	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton Church of England Primary School, Street BA16 9LA

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you. We found Walton to be an outstanding school, congratulations! You are working very hard and the actions taken by your headteacher, governors and other adults in your school are improving your school very quickly. These are some of the best things we found.

- You really enjoy coming to school and attend well. You are very polite and extremely well behaved. This is helping you to do well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- You enjoy helping in school and get on really well together.
- Your teachers teach you very well so that you make outstanding progress. You have a very good attitude to your work and find your learning really interesting.
- You are very well cared for and you told us that you feel very happy and safe in school.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. Although they know what needs to be done next, we have asked them to do some things to make your learning even better.

- We would like them to help you make better progress with your writing by helping you to improve your spelling and by making sure that writing tasks are always interesting for boys, so that they can do just as well as the girls.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley
Lead inspector

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