

# Walton Priory Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124426
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380893
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Charalambos Loizou HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Bird
<b>Headteacher</b>	Max Pierzchalla
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Beacon Rise Walton Stone ST15 0AL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 814930
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 819304
<b>Email address</b>	office@waltonpriory.staffs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou

Her Majesty's Inspector

Joan McPhail

Additional inspector

Jillian Smith

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 23 lessons, which included visits to intervention groups for pupils with additional learning needs, and observed 18 teachers and some teaching assistants. An inspector heard pupils in Year 6 read and scrutinised their writing in workbooks. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and the lead inspector spoke to some parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Questionnaire responses from 139 parents and carers were analysed, together with 108 responses from pupils and 22 from staff. Inspectors scrutinised the arrangements and records kept by the school to safeguard pupils. They also looked at the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

The school is below average in size compared to most middle and secondary schools. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from range of minority ethnic backgrounds and none are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low compared to most schools, as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The main areas of additional need include moderate or specific learning difficulties, such as speech, language or communication difficulties, and includes a small number of pupils who have autism.

Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Geography Mark.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school and the teaching has improved well since the last inspection. The school is not yet outstanding because some pupils fall short of their targets in mathematics in Key Stage 2, and some of the teaching should be more adaptable to meeting the learning needs of all pupils.
- Pupils achieve well and their attainment is improving strongly. They reach high standards in English and attainment is well above average in mathematics by the end of Year 8. Pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their learning in mathematics.
- The teaching is mainly good and an increasing proportion is outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 3. Teachers pose stimulating questions and, although the pace of learning is good in nearly all lessons, teachers do not always provide specific targets for individual pupils to aim for.
- Pupils are well behaved and attendance is high. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and pupils are enthusiastic learners. Some parents and carers believe that a few pupils disturb lessons. Although this was not observed during the inspection, there are a few occasions when pupils are not engaged enough when tasks are undemanding. Pupils feel very safe and inspectors have judged that the staff manage pupils' behaviour well.
- The school is well led and managed. The involvement of middle leaders and governors as part of extended leadership is having a positive effect on raising standards. Middle leaders are developing their monitoring roles well to evaluate staff performance. School improvement planning is ambitious and effective, although plans do not always include clear and measurable criteria from which to gauge how much improvement is being made to pupils' attainment and teachers' performance.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the current improvements to pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, and ensure that:

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- pupils have more opportunities in lessons to correct their work to consolidate and extend their learning, particularly in number and calculation
  - teachers assess and check pupils' learning and progress more robustly to intervene sooner if they fall short of their expected targets.
- Ensure that all teachers provide sufficiently ambitious learning targets for pupils to aim for by:
- adapting their planning during lessons so that tasks meet the specific learning needs of all pupils
  - providing more individualised learning targets for pupils to aim for.
- Ensure that members of the extended leadership team devise clear success criteria from which to monitor pupils' progress and staff performance in the school's improvement plans. The plans should also include stages or milestones which ensure that more frequent evaluations are made to ensure that all pupils reach their targets.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Attainment is rising and is well above average. Pupils join the school in Year 5 with levels of attainment that are in line with those expected for their age. Over half of the current Year 6 and Year 8 pupils are on course to reach levels that exceed those expected for their age in English and mathematics. The vast majority of parents and carers rightly believe that their children make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Although most pupils are making good progress in mathematics, this is uneven, particularly in Key Stage 2, because lessons do not always provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and skills in number and calculation. The gap in attainment in mathematics between boys and girls at Key Stage 2 that was evident from last year's national tests is narrowing because of more targeted support for pupils who find mathematics difficult.

Pupils' progress is most rapid in Key Stage 3 and in lessons across the school where the teaching is more ambitious and adapts to pupils' needs. In a Year 8 English lesson, for example, pupils thrived on the opportunities they had to investigate the poem 'The Highwayman'. The pupils made rapid progress because the work was carefully tailored for individuals and groups. They improved their narrative writing and read with fluency and understanding, reflecting the challenge and direction being offered by the teacher. Although pupils make good progress overall in mathematics, there is more inconsistency across Key Stage 2 because pupils' books show that they are not always revisiting work to apply their knowledge of number to correct mistakes using different methods of calculation.

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Pupils achieve well to reach high standards in other subjects, including information and communication technology, science, physical education and the humanities.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers usually plan lessons that have suitably ambitious outcomes for different groups and individuals. Literacy skills are taught very well. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to read aloud, or express their views and ideas with clear articulation. Pupils' writing is increasing in accuracy and is well formed because teachers are vigilant when marking or improving pupils' communication and literacy skills. Pupils in Year 5, for example, edited a play script and skilfully noted key features that distinguished it from narrative texts. The teacher demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and provided clear direction using a popular science fiction television series. The subject matter was carefully chosen to stimulate the interest of boys, reflecting how well teachers adapt the curriculum to suit the learning needs of both boys and girls.

The pace of learning varies in some lessons because teachers are not always adapting their planning to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those of higher ability. Even though lessons encourage pupils to be active learners some are not being challenged sufficiently when going over work that they already know and understand. Workbooks include broad learning targets that point to different levels of attainment but pupils are not provided with individual targets to ensure that they fully understand the next steps needed to reach higher levels.

Nearly all parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires expressed satisfaction with the quality of teaching. Inspectors agree that the teaching is nearly always good with an increasing amount that is outstanding. The curriculum is varied and well planned to offer variety and interest through practical learning when working outdoors or visiting exhibitions or museums. Thoughtful class discussions in religious education or personal, social and health education lessons broaden pupils' understanding and experiences. For example, pupils in Year 8 discussed with great care and consideration the feelings and emotions of characters in real-life situations, reflecting how well the curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are well behaved and show positive attitudes to learning. Although some parents and carers believe that lessons are sometimes disrupted by inappropriate behaviour, this is very rare and pupils say that adults deal very well with any incidents. The school's very clear behaviour management policy has created a calm, productive and positive climate for learning and socialising. Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected in high attendance rates and their very good punctuality. Effective mentoring and nurture sessions for pupils with special educational needs have a positive effect on the most vulnerable pupils, including those who have emotional difficulties, or who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. Pupils respect each

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other's views and are attentive, responsive and keen to ask questions in lessons, although some go off task on those few occasions when the teaching is not demanding enough of them.

The school's records and pupils' views confirm that pupils are usually well behaved. Pupils spoke with confidence about the support and guidance they receive from staff and spoke warmly about their relationships with other pupils and with adults. 'I love this school,' said one pupil, with nods of agreement from his classmates, 'It is very friendly and everyone wants you to do well.' Pupils feel very safe and many have stated that they trust that adults will deal effectively bullying. Pupils are very clear about how to deal with different forms of harassment, including racial intolerance or cyber bullying. School councillors and monitors are given the responsibility of representing the views of other pupils. Pupils show maturity and respect when listening to other points of view and are able to moderate their own behaviour to meet the high expectations set by teachers. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 8 mathematics lesson. The pupils were able to get on with a particularly interesting and challenging task independently without being reminded by the teacher about noise levels or how to organise themselves when working in groups.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and the senior management team have steered the school well since its last inspection. Rising standards and the increasing impact of teaching on pupils' learning and personal development, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement. Teaching has improved through the systematic monitoring of lessons and the coordinated professional development work led by a skilful deputy headteacher in collaboration with the strongest practitioners across the school.

Leadership has been broadened to include a wider management group called the extended leadership team. This involves middle leaders more in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress. The school's improvement plans provide a coherent framework that incorporates a timetable for reviews of pupils' attainment. The performance of staff is reviewed well and accounts for the increasing amount of good and outstanding teaching seen across the school. The cycle of monitoring of lessons and teachers' assessments are robust but improvement plans lack measurable success criteria for staff to gauge how well pupils are doing towards their expected attainment targets. As a result, some pupils fall short of their expected targets, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Target dates for reviews are set out in the school improvement plans but these lack stages or milestones to ensure that the extended leadership team can monitor more frequently and check that pupils and staff are on track to reach their performance targets.

The governing body is highly skilled and competent in supporting and scrutinising the work of the school. It has yet to formalise a systematic process of monitoring visits to lessons alongside senior and middle leaders. The governors' committees include appropriate links between governors and learning facilitators or faculty leaders,

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which are helping to challenge the performance of the school.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and engaging for pupils and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides stimulating and practical projects that combine different subjects and include an extensive range of visits and visitors. Physical education and sport make a significant contribution to pupils' health and well-being, as well as encouraging particularly talented pupils to participate in sports at elite levels of competence. Booster work and effective interventions support those who find learning difficult. There is a commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most in the strong pastoral support and care provided for pupils with autism and the opportunities that all pupils have to achieve as well as they can. Pupils also benefit from their experience and understanding of the diversity of ethnic and cultural traditions in the local and wider area. This makes a significant contribution to tackling discrimination and developing racial tolerance through, for example, the school's international links and partnership work with schools, universities and organisations.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were being met very well and, as well as being in line with statutory requirements, there are robust risk assessments of all school activities and resources.



## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Walton Priory Middle School, Stone, ST15 0AL**

Thank you so much for making a positive contribution to our recent inspection. We really enjoyed talking to many of you and seeing your work. Your views, alongside those of your parents and carers, were very helpful, including your responses to the inspection questionnaires. The very large majority of those asked to complete questionnaires have stated that pupils enjoy school and learn a lot and this is reflected in your high attendance rates. Well done and keep this up.

Your school has improved well since its last inspection and continues to be a good school. The inspectors were pleased to see that you behave well, although we noted that some of your parents and carers would like to see more good behaviour in lessons. Many of you have told us, or written in questionnaires, to say that most of the time pupils are well behaved and attentive and inspectors agree. Your work shows that you are increasingly reaching higher standards in reading and writing. Mathematics standards are also improving well but some of you, particularly in Years 5 and 6, should be doing better in your number and calculation work.

Even though the inspectors have recognised many improvements since your last inspection, they have judged that some lessons could still be more challenging to help more of you exceed the levels expected for your age. We have asked your teachers to check how well you are doing more carefully and to provide you with individual or personalised learning targets to aim for. We have also asked your headteacher, staff and governors to make sure that the school continues to improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons help your learning to improve at a faster rate. They can do this by setting specific dates or milestones in the school's improvement plans with clear objectives that senior and middle leaders can use to check how much progress is being made to improve your performance and the school as a whole.

You can all help too by carrying on trying hard, behaving well all the time and keeping up your high attendance rates. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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