

Walpole Highway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120887
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358868
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Day
Headteacher	Richard Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. She visited six lessons and observed two teachers. The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. She observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, safeguarding documents, pupils' progress data and other documentation. The inspector analysed 19 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are all pupils, particularly the higher attainers, achieving as well as they should in all subjects especially mathematics?
- Is the quality of care, guidance and support a strength of the school?
- Is self-evaluation sufficiently rigorous and accurate to enable new leaders and managers, working within a federated structure, to bring about and sustain improvement?

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has gained national Healthy Schools status and has Activemark and Eco-school awards.

The school is part of a federation and works in partnership with two other local primary schools. The three schools share the same headteacher, who took up his post in September 2010, and a joint governing body.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Walpole Highway is a satisfactory and improving school. Although attainment, particularly in mathematics, has declined since the last inspection, new leaders and managers are bringing about improvements. Self-evaluation is rigorous so the governing body and senior leaders are knowledgeable and realistic about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the school has a satisfactory and growing capacity to improve further. The headteacher has a sharp focus on using assessment data to identify how much progress pupils are making and where they need extra help to reach their targets. Clear priorities for improvement have been identified, such as the need to raise attainment in mathematics. Strategies are now in place to tackle areas of weakness and although these have not yet had their full impact, attainment is beginning to rise and pupils' progress is accelerating.

The school has many strengths. Pupils and their parents and carers are very appreciative of the good care, guidance and support which the school provides. This contributes well to pupils' personal development. Both in class and around the school, pupils behave well, show respect for staff and for each other and are kind and helpful to visitors. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Both pupils and staff feel valued as part of a close-knit team. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning and morale is high.

Pupils settle in quickly and make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, although the provision indoors is better than in the outside area. All groups of pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school to reach standards which, although higher in English than in mathematics, remain broadly average overall. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in response to the satisfactory teaching they receive. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory and in some lessons, they are good. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because the pace is brisk, activities are varied and challenging and resources stimulate pupils' interest. In other lessons, expectations are not high enough, work is insufficiently challenging and pupils do not have enough time to find out things for themselves and learn independently. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) are currently underdeveloped.

Senior leaders, managers and teachers are all new to their roles. The headteacher is in the early stages of distributing leadership responsibilities and developing the roles of other senior leaders and managers. New initiatives to share subject expertise more widely and involve leaders more fully in monitoring and evaluating the school's work have yet to have an impact on outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in mathematics, by:

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- ensuring that work is challenging and teachers' expectations are high in all lessons
 - allowing pupils more opportunities to make greater use of ICT to enhance their learning
 - allowing more time for pupils to learn independently and do things for themselves
 - giving pupils opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in many different contexts.
- Develop the roles of leaders and managers at all levels by:
 - building upon current initiatives to promote more effective sharing of subject expertise
 - further involving senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and determining its strategic direction
 - making greater use of ICT to develop and share resources and expertise.
 - Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Reception class by:
 - improving the quality of the outdoor learning area
 - encouraging children to choose outdoor activities more frequently.
 - Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils enjoy learning and their achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils respond well to the satisfactory and often good teaching they receive. Most answer questions readily, share ideas and information sensibly and work steadily on the task in hand. Pupils enjoy being given practical tasks and working independently. In a science lesson, they quickly worked out efficient ways to measure the length of each other's forearm. In mathematics, pupils enjoyed planning a party on a limited budget. Most children enter the Reception class with skills which are below those expected for their age. From these starting points, work in pupils' books and the school's detailed tracking data both confirm the satisfactory progress pupils are making. Results in Year 6 tests and assessments show that attainment in mathematics was significantly below that in English in previous years. However, as a result of the school's robust action to address this weakness, particularly by making good use of assessment data and giving well-targeted extra help to pupils who need it, attainment is now beginning to rise. School data confirm that Year 6 pupils' progress is improving in mathematics and pupils are on track to reach their targets this year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of minority ethnic heritage receive timely and well targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants so they make the same progress as their peers.

Pupils say how safe they feel at school. They have few concerns about bullying and are confident that if they have any worries or concerns, these will be quickly sorted out. Older pupils are happy to take on responsibility for helping younger children. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and appreciate and respect the

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differences between their own and other cultures. They feel that they are listened to but at present there is no school council for them to air their views in a more formal way. Pupils' basic skills are broadly average and these, combined with their good understanding of how to work together in pairs and teams, means they have a satisfactory preparation for future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and in some lessons, they are good. Teachers are knowledgeable and manage their classes well. Pupils are well known as individuals and in the best lessons, work is closely matched to their needs. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in these mixed-age classes by supporting all groups of pupils and giving them the skills and confidence to learn effectively. In some lessons, pupils become a little restless because teachers talk for too long and they have less time to find out things for themselves. Teachers make good use of interactive white-boards to display attractive resources which engage pupils' interest. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT themselves to support and enhance their learning. Teachers mark books regularly and make increasingly good use of assessment data to help pupils take the next steps in their learning.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils and engages their interest. Pupils particularly enjoy studying topics which link subjects together, such as the current focus on studying

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'the great outdoors'. Although this work helps pupils to develop their basic skills, they do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of different contexts. Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum. During the inspection, older pupils were developing a good understanding of another culture by meeting two Chinese visitors and greatly enjoyed putting on traditional Chinese dress.

In this small school, each pupil is well known and valued as an individual and all receive good care, guidance and support. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported by all staff. Good use is made of outside agencies to ensure that those who need specialist help receive this in a sensitive and timely way. Transition between each stage of pupils' education is very smooth. Good links with the secondary school ensure pupils transfer confidently from Year 6 to Year 7.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in driving improvement is currently satisfactory because initiatives to improve the school are recent. Although they are beginning to make a difference, they have not yet had their full impact on raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. The headteacher, working with the three federated primary schools, has been instrumental in developing the roles of leaders and managers further. His clear vision for sharing subject expertise, particularly through the increased use of ICT, and for the greater involvement of senior staff in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, are priorities for development shared by all staff.

Governance is good. The governing body plays a strategic role in the federation and has been instrumental in bringing together three schools and their associated communities which, although retaining their individual identities, work together as one effective unit. The school has forged good links with parents and carers and has particularly strong partnerships with other schools. The school adopts good safeguarding practice. Staff are well trained and all required risk assessments, safeguarding policies and procedures are fully in place. The talents and skills of individuals are valued and all have equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school promotes community cohesion well within the local communities but has yet to monitor and evaluate the impact of this work. Links with communities further afield have yet to be fully developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy learning in the Reception class. They quickly adopt school routines by following the good examples set by older pupils in this mixed-age class. They were seen confidently and eagerly participating in singing an amusing rhyme about a camel, who turned out to be a horse, before settling down to more demanding work in phonics (letters and sounds). Each group of Reception children is very small and their starting points vary markedly from year to year. On average, over the last three years, children have entered the Reception class with skills which are below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach standards which, overall, are closer to the national average when they enter Year 1. Children feel safe in this supportive and caring environment. Teachers and teaching assistants monitor their progress carefully and ensure that their safety and welfare requirements are met well. The indoor learning environment is stimulating but the provision for outdoor learning and the opportunities for children to use the outdoor area are more limited. Reception children benefit from at least satisfactory and often good teaching when teacher-led activities are challenging and engage their interest. Opportunities for children to learn independently, although satisfactory, are fewer. Experienced leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage is bringing about steady improvement in outcomes for children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who filled in the questionnaire, almost all were entirely satisfied with the education their children receive. They are particularly appreciative of the good care, guidance and support the school provides and several comment on how friendly and approachable staff are. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns about the progress their children are making. The inspection judged the progress of pupils to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walpole Highway 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	5	26	14	74	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	32	9	47	2	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	47	10	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	32	12	63	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	47	10	53	0	0	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)	3	16	16	84	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	32	12	63	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	26	14	74	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	53	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	68	5	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	74	5	26	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 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 2009/10 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.



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walpole Highway Primary School, Wisbech, PE14 7QQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. A particular thank you to those of you who spent time telling me about your work in class and the things you enjoy doing at school. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in the questionnaire.

This is what I found out about your school.

Yours is a satisfactory and improving school where you make satisfactory progress.

You receive good care, guidance and support from your teachers which encourages you to behave well and stay safe and healthy.

The teaching you receive, the curriculum you follow and the way your school is led and managed are all satisfactory.

These are some of the things I have asked your school to do:

To help you make even faster progress, particularly in mathematics, by:

- making sure the work in your lessons is challenging
- giving you more opportunities to learn independently, to do things for yourselves and to use ICT
- giving you more opportunities to use your mathematical skills in other subjects.

Improve the outdoor learning area for the youngest children.

All of you can help your school to improve by continuing to behave well, attending regularly and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Wallis

Lead inspector

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