

# Walmley Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103543
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	363678
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Davis

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jackie Plimmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Pilmore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Walmley Ash Road Sutton Coldfield B76 1JB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and groups of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, development planning, data related to the tracking of pupils' progress, records of senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning, safeguarding documents, minutes of the governing body and pupils' work. Inspectors also considered responses to questionnaires from 127 parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

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

- How effectively do groups of pupils in current classes learn, particularly those of lowest ability, and what progress do they make?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that meet pupils' individual needs and how well do pupils understand their targets and how to improve their work?
- How well does the school promote community cohesion and what is the impact of this on pupils' understanding of children in other contexts?

## Information about the school

Walmley Junior is larger than average for a school of its type. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark, the Sports Partnership Mark and the Football Association Charter Mark. The school provides before-school and after-school childcare.

**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

Pupils make exceptional progress at this outstanding school. They know this and are extremely proud of their achievements, of their staff and of the school's leaders. As one pupil commented, 'It is really lovely that we can go to the headteacher or deputy at any time and they will always listen to us no matter how busy they are.' Pupils also know that they share responsibility for the school's success. Their behaviour is outstanding and they are excited by their learning and keen to do their best. Parents and carers are equally positive about the school. Typical comments included, 'Walmley is a brilliant school...it has a wonderful ethos' and, 'My son has enjoyed every day at Walmley Junior and really feels he belongs there. We are thrilled with the quality of education.'

Consistently high standards have been maintained over the past three years and the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the highest levels are well above the national average in both English and mathematics. Pupils make outstanding progress throughout the school, showing great enthusiasm for the active tasks that are set for them. For example, Year 5 pupils planned, researched and produced a Roman museum exhibition for parents and carers, including artefacts, clothing, cookery and artwork. This learning for a real-life purpose is at the heart of the school's work and, as a result, pupils can talk with confidence about their memorable learning experiences. They have an extremely good understanding of how to improve their work and frequently set their own targets as a result of the advice they receive from teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and gain confidence and independence in their learning through the encouragement they receive. As a result, they also make outstanding progress in relation to their targets.

A strong community spirit is evident and pupils say they feel like one family. They feel very safe and value the way that they are looked after and cared for. As a result they show great care for each other and are quick to try and include anyone who is on their own. Older pupils care for younger ones, including acting as play leaders at the neighbouring infant school. Year 6 members of the school council take their responsibilities of representing the views of each class very seriously but also enjoy the responsibility of selecting a pupil from the class they support, for a special award every week, serving to reinforce the positive ethos of the school. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplified by the mature ways in which pupils reflect on and discuss complex issues, for example, the conflicting views of the importance of preserving the rainforest as opposed to the world's need for fuel. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other and there is a high level of mutual respect. Racist behaviour is not tolerated and pupils think deeply about moral issues. For example, Year 4 pupils reflected on what it means to belong to a group or be excluded and, in assembly all pupils reflected on which is more important: happiness or wealth.

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A high proportion of lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding. Warm relationships are evident and teachers lead by example in inspiring their pupils to be curious, imaginative and creative. Tasks are planned that excite this curiosity. For example, a Year 6 class were asked to imagine the owner of a range of objects presented to them and then write about this character in the style of Dylan Thomas. This is an example of the extremely high expectations of teachers and, as a consequence, pupils are excited by and consistently rise to these high-level challenges. Information and communication technology is used extremely well to enhance learning. The exciting curriculum is planned to meet the specific needs of the pupils and promotes high quality learning. A school trip is the highlight of every year, culminating in a week's visit to France, where Year 6 pupils use their French in a variety of situations and experience French life. The school's outstanding care, guidance and support includes focused support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and closely involves parents and carers in the individual plans for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The inspirational headteacher is supported by a strong team. They have ensured a unified approach with a shared vision of excellence in both provision and pupil outcomes. Middle managers and all staff are held accountable for pupil performance and a strong sense of teamwork is evident with teachers new to the profession being particularly well supported. The governing body is highly effective in holding the school to account and are fully involved in strategic planning. The school has excellent links with other local schools and organisations, enhancing the school's provision and providing opportunities for sharing good practice and promoting pupils' well-being. Although the school is fully committed to promoting community cohesion and pupils, as a result, have an outstanding understanding of their place in the school and local community, the school recognises that their understanding of their role as national and global citizens is an area for development. Leaders have ensured that the school has made significant improvement since its previous inspection, particularly in all aspects of provision and pupil outcomes, and show an outstanding capacity to sustain these improvements.

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

- Provide appropriate experiences to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their place in the national and global communities.

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

**1**

Pupils enter the school, having reached above-average attainment in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, and they build on their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Lesson observations during the inspection and the schools' assessment data shows that attainment throughout the school is significantly above that expected of pupils their ages. Their outstanding progress in lessons is a result of pupils' high levels of motivation because they understand the purpose of the tasks they are given. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils quickly grasped the concept of the mean as an average, because it was set in the context of calculating averages related to their understanding an average annual salary. If a difficult problem cannot be immediately solved, it is left for the pupils to think about during the lesson. They respond to this challenge by competing to be first to solve it. The strong focus on independence results in

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pupils taking responsibility for their own learning and being keen to research topics further at home. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very few who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. The individually focused support they receive and the high expectations of their teachers ensure that they are appropriately challenged.

Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. There is very little bullying and pupils are confident that adults will support them if they cannot resolve a situation themselves. They have an excellent understanding of road safety and of what constitutes an unsafe situation when using the internet and how to deal with it. Their behaviour is generally exemplary, both in lessons and around the school, and they receive many compliments about the way in which they conduct themselves on school trips. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting activities provided and there is a very large take-up for these. All learn to swim and enjoy opportunities to learn outside in the open-air classroom that has been specially constructed. Members of the eco council are active in promoting sustainability and the gardening club ensures that the school grounds are immaculate. Pupils are proud of the range of vegetables they grow and appreciate the quality of healthy school dinners provided by the school cooks.

Pupils' outstanding contribution to the community is exemplified by their work with other local schools to put on an art exhibition in the town centre, displaying and selling their own artwork. This art was inspired by people and things that are close to them. Pupils are also very keen to initiate and organise fund-raising activities for charity. In these, pupils highly value the fact that teachers are so willing to support their initiatives, for example, supporting their organisation of a talent show and enabling its success. Their high level of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technology, their high attendance levels and their confident and mature personal skills make an outstanding contribution to ensuring their future economic well-being.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teachers plan very well to meet the needs of different abilities in their classes so that all are suitably challenged and supported. They are skilled at reinforcing prior learning and then building on this during each lesson. Learning objectives are underpinned by clear success criteria, enabling pupils to evaluate their own progress against them. Widely ranging resources are prepared well to enhance learning and stimulate creativity, for example, artefacts, costumes for role play and even a stethoscope for pupils to hear their own heartbeat in a health education lesson. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, not only to support individual pupils, but also as a key resource in the classroom supporting the learning of all.

Teachers ensure all pupils are fully involved by using a wide variety of strategies including group work, talking to partners and highly effective directed questioning that probes pupils' understanding, requiring them to think and justify their answers. This questioning enables teachers to evaluate the learning and to quickly move pupils on once they understand. In the very few satisfactory lessons observed, this skill was not so well developed and resulted in pupils sometimes having to wait for others to finish. Marking of pupils' literacy and numeracy work is of a consistently high quality and pupils take responsibility for assessing themselves and their peers as a result of a clear understanding of their targets. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to respond to their comments on how to improve their work and to practice, for example, correct spelling. The school

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recognises, however, that assessment and marking in some subjects is not yet consistently at the same high level as in English and mathematics.

The school provides a stimulating and airy learning environment where the high quality display reflects the wide variety of activities undertaken by the pupils. The broad curriculum provides a wealth of memorable experiences and promotes creativity. There is a strong focus on music, physical education and art and design including the opportunity to work with a professional artist on an extended project. Excellent cross-curricular links provide opportunities to promote literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills through a variety of relevant topics. For example, Year 4 pupils acted out the role of tribesmen, miners and scientific researchers seeking a cure for cancer as part of their rain forest topic. They then produced impressive persuasive text using complex language to argue their point of view. French is taught throughout the school and extra-curricular opportunities are well attended, from a film club and a science club to a wide variety of sporting opportunity, many taught by professional players. Large numbers of pupils have tuition in a variety of musical instruments and enjoy performing in assemblies and at concerts. Personal, social and health education lessons play a key role in promoting pupils' personal outcomes.

Outstanding arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition as pupils enter the school and move on to a range of secondary schools. Pupils bring their literacy books with them when they enter Year 3, so that teachers can match their work accurately to meet the needs of individuals. A variety of projects and visits prepare pupils for their secondary education, including taking part in competitions where they are able to meet pupils from other schools. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is thoroughly targeted to specific needs, balancing the need to develop skills with the need to build self-esteem and confidence. The school has an in-depth understanding of pupils' specific situations. Communication with parents and carers takes a high priority and contributions from a range of agencies are used to support those pupils with specific needs. The school has strong evidence of its impact in removing barriers to learning for them. The 'Early Birds' before-school club and the after-school childcare provision is greatly valued by parents and carers and enjoyed by pupils, providing a healthy breakfast and a range of activities and a warm, homely atmosphere.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The school's leaders express their passion for promoting achievement and the well-being of the pupils in their care. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and



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have identified well-focused areas for future development. There is a high level of devolved responsibility, and a very effective focus on equipping the staff with the skills to meet these responsibilities. Staff feel a valued part of the team and know that they make a significant contribution to the school's continued development. There are high expectations at all levels and monitoring and evaluation processes are rigorous and extensive, identifying where weaknesses lie and providing appropriate support to address them. The exceptional leadership of the governing body has ensured appropriate training so that governors are skilled up and appropriately deployed. All governors have a high level of involvement in the school, have excellent relationships with the staff and provide very effective support and challenge for the school's leaders. As a result they have a significant impact on the work of the school.

Safeguarding is given a high priority. Procedures and policies are robust and all training is kept up to date, although some records and policies have minor imperfections which the school is dealing with. Child protection arrangements, including record keeping, are secure and risk assessments, including those for the large number of school visits, are thorough. The outstanding promotion of equal opportunities has ensured that all groups of pupils make the same progress. Any discrimination is tackled very effectively. Thorough tracking of progress identifies those pupils in danger of underachieving and enables the school to provide appropriate intervention and support. For example, assessment data showed an unevenness in the performance of boys and girls in reading on entry to the school. This was quickly addressed, resulting in equal achievement in this area. Boys now show great enthusiasm for reading as a result of the motivating books provided for them. The school never gives up on a pupil but closely monitors the impact of the support provided and tries something new if he or she is not making progress.

There are strong partnerships with parents and carers. The school listens to their views and responds to their concerns. A few feel that the school does not do enough to help them to support their child's learning. In response, the school's leaders are currently planning the development of focus groups to address this issue and further raise parents' and carers' awareness of the work of the school. Strong partnerships with local schools are enabling teachers to share good practice, particularly in assessment, and to share ideas. Other partnerships with local business, for example through the Rotary club, have enabled pupils to undertake extended community service projects. The school has assessed its position and context in the community and has identified what it needs to do to further promote community cohesion. There has been very strong action at school and local level and the school is a hub for parents and carers within the community. The international primary curriculum ensures that pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and religions.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded were overwhelmingly positive. Two parents expressed concern that the poor behaviour of some pupils was jeopardising their child's safety and that the school was not managing behaviour well. Inspectors judged that behaviour is outstanding and the school's procedures for managing behaviour are effective. They support the schools' view that all pupils need to learn how to resolve conflict and to calm and support those who have difficulty in managing anger. A very few parents and carers asked for more information so that they can support their child's learning more effectively. The school has plans in place to address this.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Walmley Junior 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 359 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	71	35	28	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	81	21	17	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	53	42	70	55	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	51	55	43	6	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	78	61	45	35	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	54	49	39	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	60	48	38	1	1	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)	76	60	42	33	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	74	58	47	37	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	53	50	39	5	4	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	44	56	44	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	81	64	44	35	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	69	40	29	3	2	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](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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Walmley Junior School, Sutton Coldfield B76 1JB**

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed trying your home-grown potatoes, hearing about your Roman museum and viewing your excellent art.

We judged that you go to an outstanding school. The excellent care that the school provides enables you to feel safe and well known, and you show great care for each other. You concentrate well and show great enthusiasm for your lessons. As a result you make outstanding progress and reach consistently high standards. Your teachers prepare lessons that are active, fun and exciting, enabling you to be creative and imaginative. They make sure that you can be independent by making sure you understand your targets and how to reach them. We know you are proud of your school and are excited by all the opportunities that are offered, from looking after the ducks and caring for the gardens, to going on exciting trips. You greatly enjoy all the clubs, sport and music. Your outstanding behaviour and your excellent understanding of how to stay healthy impressed us. You make an outstanding contribution to your school and local community but we have asked the school to provide opportunities to develop your knowledge and understanding of your role as national and global citizens. You enjoy taking responsibility and we were impressed by the way the school council members support each class and make weekly awards and the way older pupils help younger ones. You get on extremely well with each other and are respectful of those with different beliefs and backgrounds from your own.

We know that you greatly appreciate the school's leaders, who work so hard to make sure you learn well and develop well as young people. You can help them by continuing to take pride in your work and doing your best. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis

Lead inspector

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